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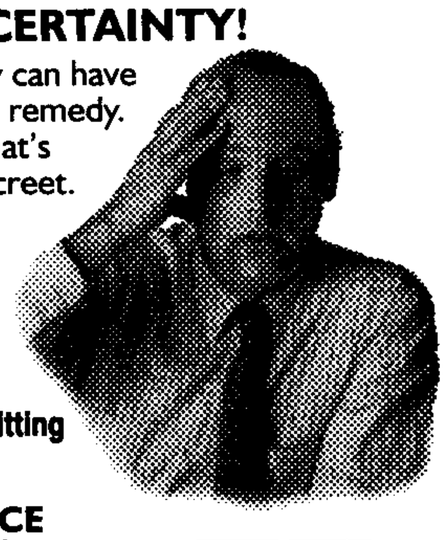

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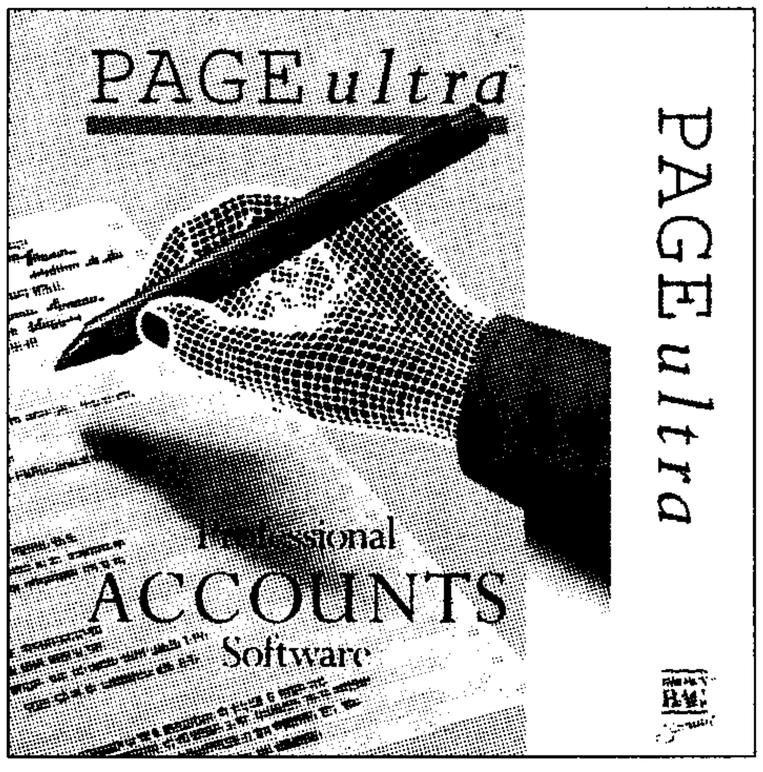

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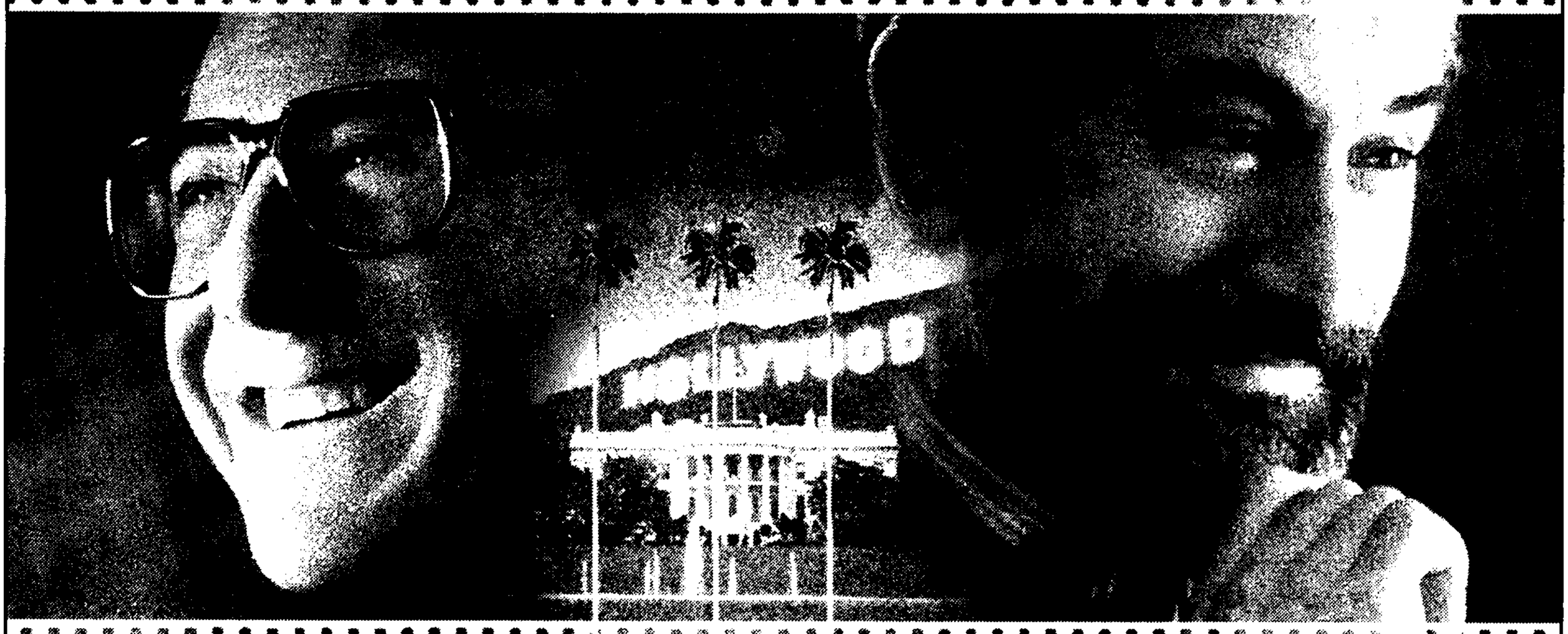

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MY competitors in the media have predictably criticised the decision of my publishing house HarperGnomes to cancel Mr Christopher Patten's book on China.

They have further criticised my newspapers such as the *Gnomes* ("only 10 yen on Monday") for failing to report the Patten affair properly.

They have tried to suggest that all these decisions are influenced by my business interests in the far east broadcasting venture ChinaGnome-SatSmut International.

Nothing could be nearer the truth *(surely some mistake? E.S.)*. It is utterly preposterous to suggest that I would act so disgracefully merely to avoid upsetting Jaing Zemin, the heroic and glorious helmsman of the Democratic Republic of China, with its hundreds of millions of consumers eagerly awaiting my Takeaway Dish offer with its incredible promise of 24 hour Sweet 'n' Sour Babes beamed into every home.

Mr Patten's grossly insulting references to my very good friend Jaing Zemin, one of the greatest men in the history of the world, are entirely irrelevant.

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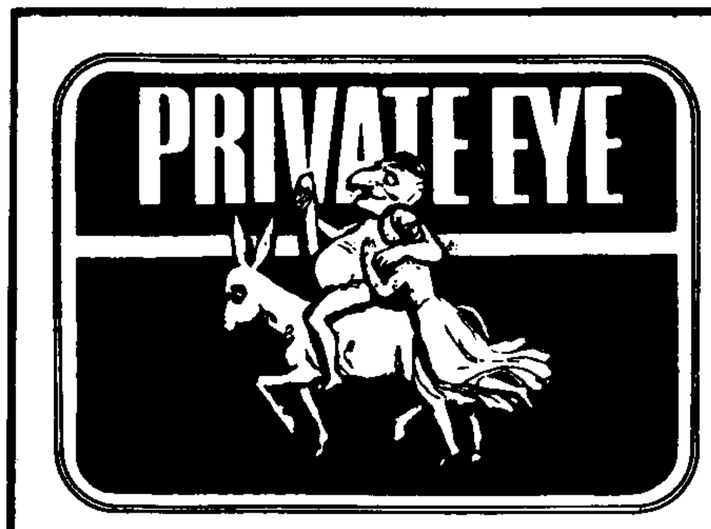

COLOUR SECTION

LAST week's *Mail on Sunday* carried a humiliating apology to Chris Patten for claiming that his memoir had been scrapped because it was unreadably boring — rather than because of political interference by the Dirty Digger.

Who was responsible for feeding this spectacularly inaccurate story to *MoS* political hack Joe Murphy? Step forward Sir Tim Bell, the world's worst spin-doctor.

Meanwhile, readers of both the *Mail on Sunday* and *Daily Mail* may have wondered why both papers were so muted in their coverage of the latest Murdoch scandal. The explanation is simple: their proprietor Lord Rothermere ordered his editors to go easy on the story.

By an amazing coincidence, the selfsame Lord Rothermere had a convivial lunch last week with... Rupert Murdoch.

JOHN ASHWORTH, who came under fire for proposing massive bonuses to Granada directors (see last *Eye*), has a history of generosity to fellow executives.

He sits on the remuneration committee for Sainsbury's where golden hellos and goodbyes are always on special offer. Director David Bremner was given £455,000 on top of his salary in 1997, shortly after joining the supermarket chain. While another director, Kevin McCarten, was given a more modest £40,000 on top of his £190,000-a-year wage, again just for accepting the job.

So sad were Ashworth and chums when David Quarmby left their band of executives they gave him a £336,000 goodbye present, plus an extra £556,000 towards his pension.

Ashworth's largesse has not always extended to the lower orders, however. When he ran the London School of Economics he was at the head of the Russell Group, a committee of principals pushing for students to pay fees. Now that student fees have become government policy, the Russell Group is pushing for, er, even higher fees for their colleges.

Ashworth has now moved on to chair the British Library where, true to form, he has started suggesting charges for library users.

RESPONSIBILITIES mount for Welsh Utilities boss Graham Hawker, who has been put in charge of Labour's "New Deal" in Wales despite his keenness for sacking his own staff (see *Eye* 944). Now chancellor Gordon Brown has given Hawker another job — as a member of the court of the Bank of England.

Hawker is one of the original fat cats whose salary jumped an incredible 137 per cent from £137,000 to £325,000 between 1995 and 1997. One of the first jobs of the court of the Bank of England is to decide on governor Eddie George's salary (currently £227,000). Given Hawker's attitude to executive pay he can look forward to a tidy raise. And should Eddie ever get the push he can look forward to a 24-carat golden handshake — three former executives of South Wales Electricity shared a £1.3m pay-off in 1996, when their jobs disappeared under a takeover by Hawker's company Hyder.

The government was also keen to present Hawker's appointment as representing a shift in the Bank from the drones of the City towards productive industry. However a quick glance at Hyder's accounts gives an idea of Hawker's priorities.

In 1996, the company spent £42.2m on redundancy, but only £0.7m on research and development. In 1997, the company paid out £79.2m to shareholders but put only £24.1m into infrastructure maintenance.

A WEEK after the *Eye* told the story of the Great Moat House Punch-Up, Jack Straw singled out the case — which occurred in his constituency — as he announced a new register of freemasons in the police and judicial system.

As we reported in *Eye* 943, the case involved father and son Sidney and Shaun Callis, who were attacked and then charged with assaulting freemasons when they were hurled out of a masonic dinner at their overnight hotel in Blackburn.

Lancashire police, who paid £100,000 compensation to the men three years after their acquittal on all charges, were quick to reply to Straw's remarks. "The home secretary was talking about an incident that happened nearly 10 years ago," said assistant chief constable David Smith, head of discipline and complaints. "Settlement was reached and we are satisfied we did everything we could to resolve the complaint."

What has yet to be explained by police is what happened to Sidney and Shaun Callis since their acquittal in 1989: unknown police officers gave both father and son phoney criminal records on the police national computer. An unknown person wrote an anonymous letter suggesting to police that Sidney could be the killer of nature lovers Peter and Gwenda Dixon, shot on the Pembrokeshire coastal path in 1989. He was arrested for murder and interrogated at Hinckley police station before being released without charge.

Leicestershire constabulary also tried to revoke Sidney Callis's 12-bore shotgun licence and took the weapon away for ballistics examination. "I've never had so much as a parking fine," he told the *Eye* last week. The first he knew of his phoney "criminal record" was when a police sergeant called round to take away his shotguns. He later received an apology from the chief constable of Leicestershire — but is still waiting for an explanation.

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● *...and more exclusive pics* 14
● *Garrison under siege* 25
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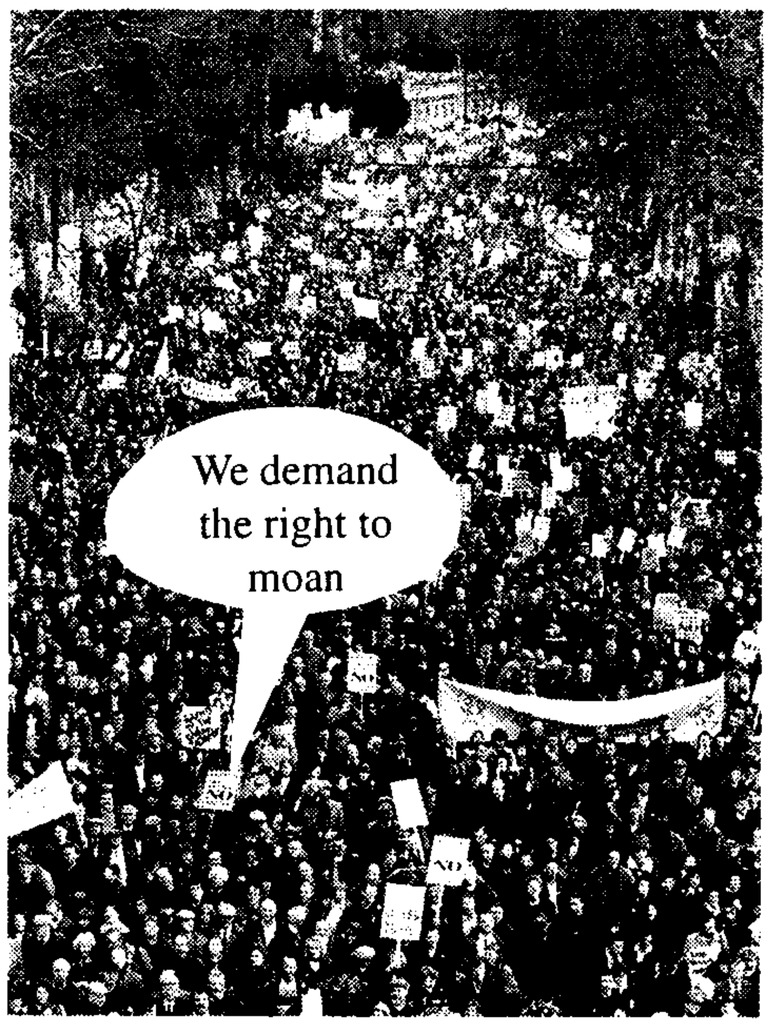
COUNTRYSIDE UNITES



Street Of Shame

"GOT a story?" the *Sun* asks its readers every day. "Phone the *Sun* news desk. 0171-782 4100."

Last Friday one *Sun* reader did just that, alerting the paper to a great story about Chris Patten, HarperCollins and the Chinese government — which had somehow eluded the sharp-eyed hacks of Wapping.

"We know about that story," the news executive replied. "I'm not sure if we've carried anything on it."

You haven't, the reader assured him. But you should: it's a corking yarn. HarperCollins, you see, is owned by a man named Murdoch, who...

"I am aware of that," the *Sun* man sighed, "but that's not the reason we haven't run it. The editor has adjudged that it would not be of interest to our readers."

By a remarkable coincidence other Murdoch editors had, quite independently, reached the same conclusion. While other national papers last Friday reported on the Dirty Digger's toadying to the Beijing despots, neither the *Sun* nor the *Times* "adjudged" the story worth a single word.

IN a speech last Friday Peter Mandelson claimed that one big difference between John Major and Tony Blair was that the new PM doesn't waste time worrying about his press coverage.

This will come as a surprise to staff at the *Guardian*, who are accustomed to receiving almost daily complaints from Downing Street. When Blair himself visited the *Grauniad* for lunch two weeks ago, he launched into a tirade against the paper, citing various "unhelpful" stories and headlines.

Not to be outdone, *Grauniad* political editor Michael White then produced an even thicker file of pro-government pieces, full of headlines such as "Another Triumph for Blair". The prime minister, looking rather peeved, abandoned his moan about the *Guardian* — and spent the rest of the lunch bleating pathetically about the small-circulation *Tribune* instead.

"COME work in the sun," says an advert in *UK Press Gazette*, seeking "keen and competent photographers" to join the California-based Splash photo agency — "covering all aspects of work from hard news and premieres to celebrity at-homes".

In the very same week one of Splash's ex-snappers, Andy O'Brien, and freelance cameraman Giles Harrison, also retained by Splash, were jailed by a Los Angeles judge for "falsely imprisoning" Arnold Schwarzenegger and terrorising his pregnant wife.

Wisely, however, the advert in *UKPG* neglects to mention that "all aspects of work" may include a spell in the slammer.

"It's Aitken... do we want to buy a sword of truth and a shield of fair play?"

UNDETERRED by the universal scorn poured on his sycophantic interviews with Mohamed Fayed, *Mirror* editor Piers "Boy" Morgan has done it again. This time his "world exclusive" is an interview with hapless bodyguard and Fayed employee Trevor Rees-Jones — an exercise set up by the ever more desperate and unpopular Egyptian grocer.

Out of earshot, *Mirror* hacks now refer to their editor as Piers Al-Morgan. And some unkind souls even suggest that he may be lining himself up for a new job replacing bouffant Michael Al-Cole as Harrods PR chief in case rumours that he is no longer the blue-eyed boy of new *Mirror* boss Kelvin MacKenzie prove to be true.

A rather likelier explanation — first floated in the *Eye* last year — is that the *Mirror*'s conversion into a Fayed puff-sheet presages a business partnership between the ailing newspaper group and the frustrated media tycoon, who wants something rather bigger than *Punch* to play with.

It would scarcely be a novelty for the *Mirror* to fall into the hands of a fat, dishonest, foul-mouthed bully of foreign extraction who has a private helicopter and a second-rate football club — and a track-record that includes severe censure from the DTI for his business methods. The only consolation for *Mirror* veterans is the thought that Fayed, like Cap'n Bob, owns a large yacht...

Fugger. A famous family of German merchant bankers, particularly influential in the 15th and 16th centuries, and proverbial for their great wealth, their newsletter and fine library. Rich as a fugger is common in Elizabethan dramatists. Charles V introduced some of the family into Spain, where they superintended the mines.

Wordsworth Dictionary of Phrase and Fable

THE long-range photos of actress Nicole Kidman being wheeled out of a Los Angeles operating theatre after undergoing surgery to remove an ovarian cyst, which graced the front and two inside pages of *The Mirror*, clearly breached the press complaints commission's post-Diana code of conduct. They also made a mockery of editor Piers "Moron" Morgan's pious pledge to stop buying paparazzi pics.

Kidman's notoriously heavy press agent Pat Kingsley (who also fronted for the late Dodi Fayed and may yet end up making excuses for his Michael Cole-less father) immediately threatened to take Morgan to the PCC. "This was an invasion of privacy. They're not allowed to run pictures like that. I hope we have a case [for the PCC] here," said Kingsley.

Interesting question: has *Mirror* MD Kelvin MacKenzie purposely allowed Moron enough rope for even the PCC's pathetic Lord Wakeham to string him up?

"POP Prats are a Pain", the *Daily Star* thundered after hearing that Liam and Noel Gallagher had been drinking, smoking and larking about on a flight to Australia. "Oasis were sick," it declared. "Sad bastards, every one."

Below this editorial, the *Star* found space for a brief comment on another hard-living legend. "Men, booze and fags have played a big part in Princess Margaret's life. Good on her for living life to the full... We'll raise a glass to that!"

***DAILY Mail* editor Paul Dacre has a clause in his contract which gives him an immediate (and huge) pay increase if the paper's circulation rises above a certain level. This has now happened: thanks to the success of the *Mail*'s recent part-work on Princess Diana, written by royal reporter Richard Kay, Dacre's salary has soared to £650,000 a year.**

But Dacre seems remarkably ungrateful to the hack responsible for his good fortune. Kay wasn't paid an extra penny for all the work he did on the Diana series, nor for promoting it in TV commercials. When he was named "Royal Reporter of the Year" at last Friday's *What The Papers Say* awards, the honour was widely reported elsewhere — but not mentioned at all in his own newspaper.

Executives at Associated Newspapers were so indignant at Dacre's shoddy behaviour that on Monday he was obliged to carry the news of Kay's award — a mere three days after the event.

QBN

"All newspapers tread a little carefully where their proprietor's interests are concerned — I don't think there's anything new in that... It's obviously very embarrassing — for HarperCollins... It's always awkward [for newspapers] when something they might print touches on their proprietor's interests... Mr Murdoch is no different from any other proprietor in that respect... Mr Murdoch is no different from any other proprietor."

MATTHEW PARRIS, political columnist of The Times, explaining the lack of interest shown by his newspaper in the Chris Patten/HarperCollins story ("Today" Programme, Radio 4, 2 March 1998)

BACK at the *Independent*, meanwhile, Boycott is still looking for someone to edit the Sunday paper. Her first choice was John Price, moustachioed editor of the *Indie*'s Saturday mag. "I'm turning your supplement into a women's magazine," she told him. "Would you like to edit the *Sindie* instead?"

Wisely Price declined the poisoned chalice, realising it would entail regular encounters with David "Rommel" Montgomery. So eager was he to avoid this, he accepted the lowlier post of arts editor.

Home editor David Felton is hanging on to his job for the time being, though he feared the worst when la Boycott summoned him to her glass-walled lair. "Well," said Rosie, "aren't you going to kiss me then?" The toadying Felton obeyed — watched through the glass by his incredulous colleagues, one of whom observed: "That's the first time I've seen Felton kissing a superior above the waist."

Of Boycott's other minions the one to watch — in the sense of avoiding turning one's back — is young-woman-in-a-hurry Anne McElvoy.

The former *Telegraph* hard-right harpie, married to *Sunday Times* deputy editor Martin Ivens (son of Michael Ivens, founder of the far-right pressure group Aims of Industry), started to reinvent herself in a Blairy-sharey sort of way on about 2 May last year when she saw which way the wind had turned.

McElvoy's empire now includes all "comment" pages in the *Indie* and *Sindie*. For some reason she is known in the office as "Eva Braun" and her comment section is fondly referred to as "Potsdam".

A LONG and very favourable article on quoted strip club operator Cherokee Leisure in the *Evening Standard* on 26 February was, according to stockmarket reporter Malcolm Withers, based on his foot-in-the-door investigative journalism. Er, not quite.

Withers' diligent research unearthed that Cherokee's East End and Essex strip joints serve food and drink at "reasonable prices"; that punters must pay £10 for each individual table-dance (in which a young lady disrobes on one's table) and that the company is expanding rapidly.

What Withers neglected to mention was that his research was done on a press trip to a Cherokee establishment on 24 February, during which he and other hacks were given free champagne and vouchers to purchase free "table dances". In an effort to investigate the subject in some depth, Withers' table endured more than half-a-dozen such performances.

CURSE OF HELLO!

THE fawning mag *Hello*'s dreaded curse has struck again — and in record time.

The celeb-toadying weekly recently unveiled "exclusive first photographs" of *Baywatch* babe Pamela Anderson, husband Tommy Lee and new baby Dylan.

"The family certainly look the picture of contentment," gushed *Hello*. "Their current happiness must be especially sweet since just over a year ago their marriage seemed on the verge of breakdown." Only three weeks later the tabloids had their own Pammie story: "Pamela Anderson broke down and pleaded with police as they arrested her violent hubby for beating her up. The former *Baywatch* babe sobbed as she told cops: 'I'm sorry, I just cannot take it any more'..."

KELVIN MACKENZIE'S relocation to Canary Wharf hasn't been an entirely smooth one. When a former Mirror hackette spotted him in the Canary Wharf hairdressers, she waited until he was trussed up in his gown and towels before storming over.

"Get rid of that arsehole Parsons," the fiery redhead advised, referring to MacKenzie's *Sunday Mirror editor* Brendan "Chucky" Parsons. "No-one with any talent wants to work at the Mirror because of him".

"Don't worry," beamed a delighted Kelv, "Everyone hates him, even his wife".

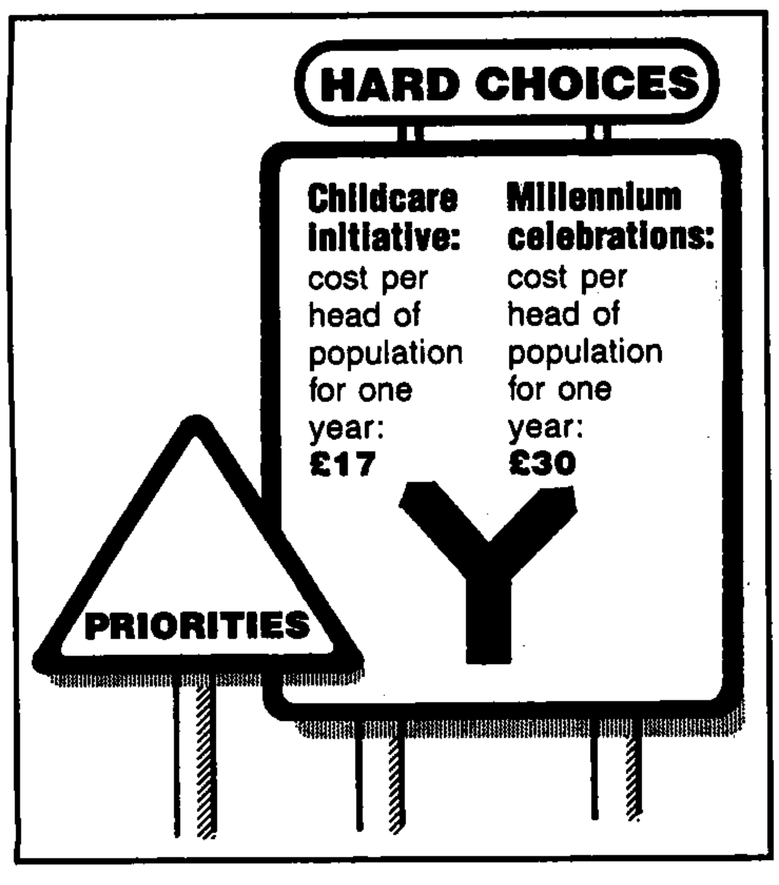
When the hackette made to leave Kelvin confided, "The last time I was attacked like that in public it was by a friend of Janet Street-Porter".

FORMER *Times* sports hack David Miller was at it again in Nagano during the winter games, sucking up to his rich chums and paymasters in the International Olympic Committee.

Having left the *Times* following the *Eye*'s disclosures about his private earnings from the Olympics and his favourable reporting of the IOC, Miller now writes for the *Telegraph*. But his despatches from Japan suggest that he attended a different event from the rest of the world's hacks. As they speculated that the IOC could be torn apart in the battle to succeed president Juan Antonio Samaranch, Miller assured *Torygraph* readers: "The Olympic community retains an enviable coherence."

The Nagano games were a series of cock-ups for the IOC: it U-turned on marijuana, attracted derision for appointing *two* more European princes to its ranks, ignored concerns about the $19bn bill to Japanese taxpayers and glossed over environmental damage. Blissfully unaware of these problems, Miller reported: "There is no doubting that the Olympic flame, the ethical concept of which is always under attack, continues to burn vigorously."

He then attacked the coverage of America's CBS network — forgetting to mention that it had infuriated his pal Samaranch by showing old footage of the IOC boss in fascist uniform with Generalissimo Franco. Although he was writing for the *Torygraph*, the paper's sports desk says that it did not pay Miller's fare.


HARD CHOICES
Childcare initiative: cost per head of population for one year: £17
Millennium celebrations: cost per head of population for one year: £30
PRIORITIES

DOMEWATCH

"The *Sun* Speaks Its Mind: DUMP THE DOME, TONY... The *Sun* urges him [Blair] to axe this monstrous folly before another penny is wasted." — Front-page exhortation in the *Sun*, 17 June 1997.

"MPs, businessmen and charities yesterday backed the *Sun*'s see-sense campaign to axe the £800 million Millennium Exhibition planned for Greenwich... *Doom the Dome today, PM.*" — *Sun* editorial, 18 June.

"Premier Tony Blair must make up his mind today on the Millennium Exhibition... The *Sun* says dump the Dome. Readers agree by 12 to 1... Axe it today, Sir. You'll be doing us all a good turn of the century." — *Sun* editorial, 19 June.

"We said it was his blind spot. By recklessly refusing to dump the Dome, the Prime Minister proves it. The *Sun* believes Tony Blair, until now so sure-footed and in tune with the people, has just made his first big blunder... There is still time for Mr Blair to cut his losses and see sense. History could remember him for many good reasons. Or his epitaph could be much sadder. *The man who blew our money on a ridiculous white elephant.*" — *Sun* editorial, 20 June.

"Labour MPs lament the lack of great — or ANY — Millennium Dome ideas. Gerald Kaufman urges Dome Secretary Peter Mandelson to get a 'much, much stronger grip' on the Greenwich concept. *How about strangling it now?*" — *Sun* editorial, 22 November.

"That damned Dome has disaster written all over it. The creative director... accuses Dome Secretary Peter Mandelson of acting like a dictator who is too easily swayed by public opinion. If only he was. Maybe then this waste of public money would be axed. *For that's what public opinion wants.*" — *Sun* editorial, 12 January 1998.

"Sorry to bring up that damned Dome again, folks. But..." — *Sun* editorial, 15 January.

"There's no place like Dome. The closer the Millennium gets, the more it scares us... [This] complex £780 million project has disaster written all over it. *Trouble is, YOU'RE paying for it.*" — *Sun* editorial, 17 January.

"Two people have total confidence that the Dome will be a success. Trouble is, Tony Blair and Peter Mandelson might just be a little bit biased. British business doesn't seem to share their optimism... Not one firm has signed on the dotted line to guarantee cash for what has all the makings of the biggest white elephant of this or any other century... What a terrible monument to the human ego." — *Sun* editorial, 17 February.

"Hello folks — I'm Mandy Millennium. Today the *Sun* becomes THE official paper of the new millennium and starts looking ahead to the biggest party in history. We're always first with the news, but to make sure our readers keep up to date with ALL the plans for the year 2000 I've been appointed Britain's first Millennium Correspondent... Yesterday I had a meeting with Dome guru Peter Mandelson to discuss my new role and pass on my hotline number for the latest developments." — Mandy meets Mandy, the *Sun*, 24 February.

"The plans for the Millennium Experience are dazzling. If it all comes off, the Prime Minister's prediction will be correct: *The Dome will be a great advert for Britain.*" — *Sun* editorial, 25 February.

On the day Mandy Millennium was appointed and the *Sun* performed its sudden, spectacular U-turn, Tony Blair announced the name of a new sponsor who had agreed to put £12m into the dome — Rupert Murdoch's Sky TV. It would, however, be absurd to suggest that the Digger would order his minions to adjust their editorial line merely to suit his commercial interests...

Number crunching

12 million

■ Mandelson's figure for the number of visitors the Dome will attract in one year

■ London Tourist Board's combined figure for the number of visitors to all of the city's top six entry-charging attractions in one year (Madame Tussaud's, the Tower, Chessington World of Adventures, Natural History Museum, Science Museum and the V&A)

LEGAL NEWS

THE legal action by London lawyer Jane Coker against the Lord Chancellor, alleging discrimination in his appointment of his crony, Herbert Smith partner Garry Hart, as his "adviser", is being watched nervously by Hart's close friend and fellow Herbert Smith partner, Chris Tavener.

Mr Tavener hopes that no one will spot another very close connection between Herbert Smith and the Blair/Irvine entourage — namely that he, Tavener, is married to Cherie Blair's sister, Lindsay.

BIZARRE public appointments by the lord chancellor, Lord Irvine, continue.

Even more remarkable has been the appointment of a new chief immigration adjudicator. When the post became vacant last year, the lord chancellor, determined to stamp out what he regarded as "soft" habits in adjudication (ie very, very occasionally allowing immigrants to stay) invited applications from everyone except existing adjudicators.

Whoops! Some bright spark discovered that the act of 1971 under which the appointment is made insists, for obvious reasons, that the chief adjudicator should already be an adjudicator. The terms of the advertisement were changed and applications duly invited from existing adjudicators.

A shortlist was drawn up, including existing adjudicators. For some reason known only to themselves those on the appointments panel (Mr Justice Keene and Mr Robin Holmes from the department) selected His Honour Judge Hubert Dunn, a circuit judge who has dealt all his life with crime, has little experience of immigration and is not best known for his devotion to law reform in that area, or any other.

And — whoops again! — Dunn was not an adjudicator and so was not eligible under the act to become chief adjudicator. This difficulty was neatly overcome in the finest traditions of the lord chancellor's office by making the judge an adjudicator and chief adjudicator in the same announcement.

MORE about Edmund Lawson QC, newly-appointed counsel to the inquiry into the racist killing of Stephen Lawrence and the police reaction to it (*Eye* 944).

The *Eye* asked the new spokesman for the inquiry two questions:

1) *Is Mr Lawson, or has he ever been, a retained counsel to the Police Federation?*

2) *If so, does this in any way affect the appropriateness of his appointment as counsel to this inquiry?*

The Home Office answer in full was as follows:

1) "He acted for Russell Jones and Walker on behalf of the Police Federation and its members before 1988, when he took silk. Since that date he has acted less frequently, but in the last two years he has not appeared on behalf of a police officer or the Federation. He is not and has never been paid a retainer by the Federation."

2) "Because he's been acting for and advising police officers for many years he has acquired something of a specialist knowledge of police matters, and this will be valuable to him for his work on the inquiry."

PS: Russell Jones and Walker are representing the Police Federation at the Stephen Lawrence inquiry.

THE THINGS THEY SAY...

"The law is a first class vehicle for the improvement of the quality of life at little or no cost."

Lord Irvine, interviewed in "The House" magazine 27.1.1992

FRICTION between the prime minister's policy unit and Gordon Brown's omnipotent Treasury continues to fester, with plans advanced for a special prime ministerial unit "to oversee the implementation of policy in Whitehall" — in other words, nobble the chancellor's charming little helper, Charlie Whelan.

So bad have relations become that former Lib-Dem aide turned policy unit nerd Roger Liddle was recently overheard muttering dark words about Gordon to, of all people, "Red" Ken Livingstone.

GORDON BROWN is a very busy man, but not too busy to accept an invitation as guest speaker at a slap-up lunch on 28 April at the Park Lane Hotel "in honour of Sir Colin Marshall, chairman of British Airways".

The hosts for the lunch are the British-American Chamber of Commerce. Hurry, hurry, hurry. You can still book a premium table for 12 for only £1140.

A disgruntled *Eye* correspondent refers sourly to Sir Colin's role in the "dirty tricks" campaign against BA's competitors, not to mention his old-fashioned attitudes to striking cabin crews last summer, and wonders impertinently whether such policies should be "honoured" by a New Labour chancellor.

"MAD" Jack Cunningham, secretary of state for agriculture, and his loyal minister Jeff Rooker are fuming at some mild parliamentary criticism of their expensive move to new luxury offices.

More than 100 hard-working government scientists have been kicked out of gorgeous Nobel House in Smith Square to make way for the ministers and their acolytes. Cunningham and Rooker have allocated themselves specially salubrious offices on the best-appointed floor. Asked by the agriculture select committee why they were moving, the ministry's first answer was a glorious example of New Labour conceit: "Ministers' accommodation in Whitehall was in need of major refurbishment and was not of any appropriate standard for hosting the UK presidency. Accommodation in Nobel House, where some of the rooms are of real architectural distinction, provides facilities which were lacking in Whitehall Place, including adequate conference rooms and press briefing areas."

The ministry told the committee last year the move would cost a mere £980,000 but, as the *Guardian* reported on 2 March, the figure has already grown to £2.3m. Astonishingly the committee members concluded that they "remain to be convinced that the move is considered and cost-effective".

The fact that no self-respecting European agriculture minister could possibly shake hands with Messrs Cunningham or Rooker in a room which was not of real architectural distinction clearly hadn't occurred to them.

"Return to violence, please"

NEW LABOUR'S fawning over Bill Clinton's plan to bomb the hell out of Baghdad didn't go down particularly well among the comrades north of the border — especially in the Livingston Constituency Labour Party, represented by once prominent CND supporter, Robin Cook.

But if Labour Party members were angry at Cookie's apparent abandonment of "jaw, jaw" in favour of "war, war", the foreign secretary went ballistic when he discovered a not-so-ancient photograph of himself, replete with CND badge, thoughtfully published in the Scottish press!

LABOUR's refusal to give Sean Connery a knighthood was originally put down to a case of petty-minded spite by Scottish secretary Donald Dewar, allegedly peeved by 007's support for the SNP. But then the spin-doctors whirled into action, explaining that it was Connery's views on wife-beating that made him ineligible. The Blair babes, they said, wouldn't allow New Labour to associate itself with such an old chauvinist.

Can this be the same Labour party that has been courting Connery's support since last May, when the PM invited him to Chequers for the weekend? Dewar himself had no qualms at being photographed with the world's sexist, sorry, sexiest Scotsman during a devolution rally in September — the day on which Connery was photographed with Gordon Brown and spoke alongside one of Dewar's junior ministers, Henry McLeish.

In November Connery was with the chancellor in Downing St, endorsing the government's "new deal" for the unemployed. Brown's spin-doctor Charlie Whelan even went so far as to suggest that Connery was on the verge of deserting the Scot Nats for New Labour.

This optimistic prediction was banged on the head — with his chance for a knighthood — when Connery appeared in an SNP political broadcast in December.

Such political sensitivity did not, apparently, come into play in the case of James "Jimmy" Gordon CBE, a former managing director of Radio Clyde, staunch Thatcherite — and old Glasgow University chum of Dewar's. Shortly after Labour was elected, the call went out: "Arise Lord Gordon" — and he did.

● DOUR and spiteful Dewar may be — but at least he is prepared to move back to Edinburgh when the Scottish parliament comes into being. Most other Scottish Labour MPs seem to be getting cold feet. Clare Short's second-in-command, George Foulkes, minister for international development and MP for the difficult-to-pronounce Carrick, Cunnock and Doon Valley, campaigned for Scottish devolution for more than 30 years.

Now he has told constituents he's decided to stay in the Commons, after all. "My decision is no reflection on the importance I attach to the Scottish parliament," he declared. **BUT** ... "however, Scotland must continue to exert strong pressure at Westminster. It is important for Scotland that our influence in the UK parliament does not diminish."

So, for the sake of Scotland, Foulkes is, er, staying in London.

MANDY'S petulant cull of chief government press officers last summer is still causing problems.

At the department of education and employment, for instances, the whole shortlist for a replacement for the sacked Jonathan Haslam as chief press officer has been universally rejected, and there is no sign of a suitable successor. Even more remarkable is the state of affairs at the Northern Ireland office, which has taken on two new senior press officers to market the expected peace agreement.

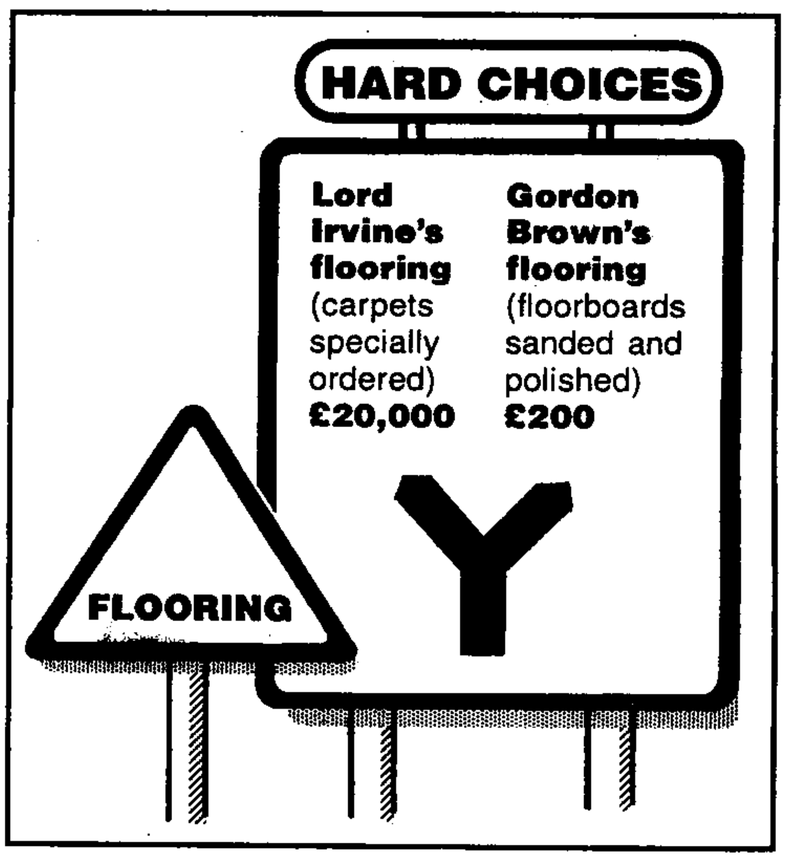
Andy Wood, the previous information director, who was much closer to Labour than to the Tories, was booted out last July. The announcement of his successor, BBC man Tom Kelly, has not caused ecstatic rejoicing among journalists in Northern Ireland. They recall Kelly's previous support for Thatcher's broadcasting ban on Sinn Fein — and the formal complaints made to BBC bosses by brave members of staff who were not excited by Kelly's robust office style. The complaints were rejected, though the head of BBC Northern Ireland, Ann Carragher, admitted there were "lessons which should be learned" from them. Whatever the lessons, nothing could stop the prolonged celebrations at the BBC as the news circulated of Kelly's departure.

LAST week the noble Lords contemplated the teaching and higher education Bill. Of particular interest were clauses 16 to 18, on the introduction of tuition fees for students.

Lord Tope, the Lib-Dem's London spokesman, was supposed to introduce an amendment recommitting the clauses to a committee of the whole House. This would have been a disaster for Labour, with dissent about tuition fees growing by the minute.

Education minister Baroness Blackstone had tried to stop the amendment first, telling Tope that the whole Bill would be toppled if he continued. She later admitted that this wouldn't be the case, so the amendment was set to go ahead. Labour was facing an embarrassing row over students paying for their education if the Bill was returned to the Commons, so the big guns were called in.

Blair called Paddy Ashdown and reminded him that if the higher education Bill was delayed legislation following behind it might be affected. What sort of legislation? Proportional representation for the European Parliament — the Lib-Dem obsession. Lord Tope promptly announced that he would not be calling for the amendment, and the debate continued smoothly.


HARD CHOICES
Lord Irvine's flooring (carpets specially ordered) £20,000
Gordon Brown's flooring (floorboards sanded and polished) £200
FLOORING

THE National Audit Office has finally released its report into the troublesome privatisation of the government's publisher, HMSO. Rupert Pennant-Rae, the former deputy governor of the Bank of England — better known as the Bonking Banker — is now chairman of the business, renamed The Stationery Office. He said he was delighted with the report as it ended "an awful lot of speculation".

But its findings were not all rosy. It revealed that once the government had named its preferred bidder as the National Publishing Group, NPG began to press for further financial concessions, leaving the government stuck in a corner.

NPG insisted on keeping the right to reassign the lease of its Norwich headquarters to Cabinet Office control. Once The Stationery Office discovered that the building needed £1m worth of renovation it did just that, leaving the Cabinet Office liable for rent and repairs to the building. The Stationery Office also refused to accept liability for £436,000 owed by HMSO for its failure to deliver the required standard of leaflets to the Benefits Agency.

The financing of the bid for NPG was arranged by Electra Investment Trust and merchant bank Robert Fleming, both of whom contribute to the Tory Party and are advised by former Tory MPs (see *Eye* 913).

THE Lib Dems' Cowley Street HQ has been besieged with telephone inquiries in recent months. Are things looking up at last for Paddy Ashdown? Alas, not.

The hundreds of extra callers have not been asking how to join the party. Instead they want to know at what time the last Tube leaves for Cockfosters and the quickest route from Upminster to Dollis Hill.

Dimwits at the privatised National Railway Enquiries have for the past five months been giving out the number to members of the public wanting information on London Underground.

"QUESTION-TIME — MP demands answers from Commons on Bernard Carr fiasco", screamed the front page of the *Hartlepool Mail* **on Wednesday 18 February, as Stockton Labour MP Frank Cook made plain his intention to ask the home secretary why the Crown Prosecution Service had wasted £100,000 trying to bring Peter Mandelson's former agent to trial only to see the deception charges suddenly dropped on the day Carr was due in court.**

"Cook drops plans to table questions over Carr case," whimpered the *Hartlepool Mail* on an inside page two days later. So what had made the bristling, inquisitive Frank Cook change his mind?

"Hartlepool MP, Mr Mandelson, has asked the Stockton North MP not to table proposed questions about the case," revealed the *Mail*, because "he said the matter concerned his constituency, he had already raised it with the home secretary, and it would break parliamentary protocol for another MP to table questions". So now you know.

WHEN the Tories rejected Nirex's plans for an underground nuclear waste dump last year, Labour inherited a policy crisis as well as a nasty and ever-growing pile of radioactive waste.

We keep importing it (in the form of nuclear waste fuel) from the rest of Europe and Japan, and churning it out of Sellafield's reprocessing plants.

The best idea the Government's nuclear waste advisors (RWMAC) have come up with so far is setting up a "repository board" which would "comprise a number of independent experts with specialisms" such as environmental sciences, planning law, radiation protection, plus representatives from the nuclear operators. These people would then apparently reach a consensus on whose backyard they will dig the hole in. Fat chance.

Similar drivel was spouted by civil servants from John Prescott's "super department" of the environment, transport and the regions when they gave evidence to the House of Lords sub-committee on nuclear waste in February. Their report prompted Lord Flowers to comment: "It seems that government policy has been that you will dispose of nuclear waste, but by no conceivable method!"

Crunchings

7% Proportion of 12 to 15 year-olds revealed by recent survey to have been illegally sold National Lottery scratchcards

Number

0.07% Proportion of retailers nationwide who have had their licence revoked by Camelot for under-age selling

NOOKS and CORNERS

SINCE moving into the spanking new Bridgewater Hall in Manchester, the famous Hallé Orchestra has teetered on the edge of bankruptcy and collapse. Things were better, of course, when the Hallé was in the old Free Trade Hall, but to have stayed there would have precluded the exciting commercial possibility of converting that proud symbol of Mancunian civic pride and latterday radicalism into a luxury modern hotel (*Eye 925*).

Back in 1989, the Great Bridgewater Initiative — which conceived the new Bridgewater Hall — recommended that the Free Trade Hall, with its auditorium created after wartime bombing, be converted into a conference centre, but that wouldn't have made so much money for the Labour-controlled City Council.

Poor Richard Leese, Leader of the Council, has seen his hopes of a 300-room hotel rising above Edward Walters' proud Neo-Renaissance façade dashed, as tiresome local opposition eventually provoked a public inquiry into the project. So now — in what can only be interpreted as an act of desperation — he has called in our old friend Anthony "Twee" Blee to help. This is cheering news for the Manchester Civic Society, as usually when Blee is hired to rubbish an historic building, history triumphs — as with St Ethelburga's Bishopsgate (*Eyes passim*).

To be fair, however, even Blee was unable to defend the grotesquely frightful diagonal slab designed by R. James Chapman, architects for La Sande and Taylor Woodrow. So — with Kevin Dash Architects — he has come up with a design of his own. At 270 feet, and 24 storeys, this is two storeys higher than the Chapman proposal, but at least attempts to take some sort of notice of the historic building below. What's more, facing onto the street, it boasts a curved tower modishly decked out in stone detailing, and a coved cornice cribbed from the late Sir James Stirling's wireless set at No.1 Poultry in the City of London.

So I have to say that the Blee tower is better, although it could scarcely have been worse than the original scheme. And it remains wrong in conception and principle. For Richard Leese, of course, it is "an exciting new use for a building that is very dear to many people in Manchester". But many people in Manchester seem to think that flogging off the Free Trade Hall to make an hotel is an act of civic irresponsibility and betrayal. The public inquiry in April should be interesting.

THESE days, Blee has many competitors as successor to Hugh Casson as a "consultant" on awkward historic buildings. A new candidate is Giles Quarme, an architect who can proudly announce that he is a member of the SPAB, a committee member of the Ancient Monuments Society, ICOMOS &c, &c. He is about to convert the stables at Althorp into a visitor centre for the Princess Di Shrine, and is currently helping Messrs Tesco build a supermarket with a block of flats on top in Clapham. The latter, which Quarme describes as "a significant landmark building," is the subject of a public inquiry into an appeal against refusal of planning permission for a design by Krish Kakkar of BMD Architects.

The site is that of the former South London Hospital for Women, a fine building facing Clapham Common designed by Sir Edwin Cooper. When it closed in 1984 the NHS immediately tried to sell the site, but it was owned by a trust which let it on a peppercorn rent on condition that a hospital there continued to treat women.

Eventually, after massive litigation, it reverted to the University of London, who flogged it to Tesco in 1994. The hospital is on the border of the boroughs of Lambeth and Wandsworth, and while the officers of the former bent over backwards to accommodate Tesco, Wandsworth recognised that there was every reason to refuse consent.

Quarme's role has been to rubbish the work of Cooper, dismissing him as a faded Edwardian commercial architect and neglecting to mention that he designed such sober and distinguished public works as the Star & Garter Home at Richmond, the Devonport Nurses' Home at Greenwich and the noble Baggage Hall at Tilbury. Never mind: it is likely that Tesco will soon need help on three other planning appeals involving historic buildings.

MEANWHILE, at Brian's Institute, blood continues to flow. Richard Hodges has resigned as director before he was pushed; the former director, Richard John, has been sacked despite spending a weekend being charming to Lady Browne-Wilkinson; and Giles Worsley, editor of the late, lamented *Perspectives*, resigned as director of the "think tank" he had been asked to set up when he found that the lawyers charged with winding down the Prince of Wales's architectural ventures were able to spend more on legal advice on sacking him than it cost to run the magazine.

Does Brian know what is going on? His "advisor", Mark Bolland, has been furious about the adverse publicity and copies of the *Eye* and the *Architects' Journal* had to be smuggled out to HRH in Bhutan in his box of watercolour paints....

'Piloti'

LESS than a week after On Demand Information went into receivership, one of its directors was seen on board another sinking ship. Cecil Parkinson (for it was he) joined William Hague as the new Conservative party was launched into the wide mauve (*shurely blue*) **yonder.**

ODI was worth about £19m last May, but before its shares were suspended it had lost 79 percent of its value. The company bet its fortune on ISDN technology, a temporary stopgap that offered slightly higher speeds for sending information over telephone lines. This has now been superseded by a new generation of modems that match the performance at much lower cost. Product lifecycle of ISDN: about three years.

The Tories, meanwhile, have lost most of their value and are betting their fortune on William Hague. Product lifecycle: er...

IDEALISTIC civil servants at the department of health have been shocked by the government insisting, for the first time for years, that the recent pay award to doctors, nurses, etc, will have to be matched by departmental cuts elsewhere.

In the week of the Gulf War scare, the instructions went out to cut all projects by up to 15 per cent, with only one exception — a crash course to develop a vaccine to counter the effects of anthrax.

Do not expect NHS bosses to rock the boat on this or any other issue for the time being, however. New Labour's announcements that hospital waiting lists will be extended have been taken with great equanimity.

Could this new-found placidity have anything to do with the Queen's birthday honours list in June, which is widely being touted as the "NHS Honours" to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the health service? Surely not.

A TRAGIC announcement appeared among the insolvency notices in the official *London Gazette* **for 11 February, alongside other defunct enterprises as Carvel Fashions Ltd, Dynamart Enterprises Ltd and Instep Shoes Ltd:**

"The Referendum Party. At an extraordinary meeting of the above-named Company, held at Swan House, Madeira Walk, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 1EU, on 30 January 1998, the following Special Resolution was passed: 'That the company be wound up as a Members' Voluntary Liquidation, and that Colin Graham Bird, of Price Waterhouse, No 1 London Bridge, London SE1 9QL, is hereby appointed as its Liquidator'."

Funeral private. No flowers. Trebles all round.

'Backbiter'

ITV

Premier Passions (BBC1)
Doctor's Orders (BBC1)
Airline (ITV)
How Do You Want Me? (BBC2)
Jonathan Creek (BBC1)

TELLY execs often complain about a favourite tic of TV critics: listing the genealogy of programmes as if they were racehorses. So a previewer will suggest that a new sit-com is "a sort of Japanese *Are You Being Served?* crossed with *The Krypton Factor*" or a reviewer will suggest that a new drama is "*Our Friends In The North* with shorter hair and less local politics".

The guys with the Paul Smith ties allege that these phrases show that critics lack imagination. But the real reason that they don't like it is because it gives them a guilty conscience. Such reviewers' phrases give away the game that most television these days is a version of something already seen. The controllers buy and sell programmes using formulas almost identical to those found on the arts pages: "I'm thinking a female David Attenborough for the 90s with cooking instead of wildlife!"

And so on. The current curse of television is what are becoming known in the industry as "Dolly progs". This is a reference to the artificially produced ewe that made the headlines recently. All over the schedules is evidence that unscrupulous executives are cloning programmes.

Chief among the Dolly progs at the moment are the so-called "docu-soaps". When Square Eyes warned in a Christmas round-up that these real-life serials (*Hotel, The Vet, Driving School, Airport*) were dominating the schedules, he (or she) had little idea of the sheer avalanche of sloppy observational documentary that the new year would bring.

Astonishingly, most of the rip-off docs seem to have involved little more than a search for professional synonyms. Thus, following the success of a fly-in-the-surgery series featuring vets, BBC1 has imaginatively come up with *Doctor's Orders*, which attaches a crew to a group of GPs in Minehead to produce a doc doc. It must be almost certain the patients in a dental surgery somewhere are staring up not only into the usual overhead light but into arc lights as well as a key element in the

"Our Father Ted, who art in heaven..."

BBC1 autumn schedule is filmed.

In the same way, the success of last year's BBC2 series featuring Bath rugby club has resulted in a Dolly prog over on BBC1: *Premier Passions*, which goes behind the scenes at Sunderland football club. Again, you can bet that, come April, the concentration of one county's batsmen in the nets will be interrupted by the crack of a clapperboard.

It's becoming clear that any game-show featuring television executives would consist solely of rounds called: What does this remind you of? The recent success of *The House*, the opera company doc, last week spawned a BBC2 fly-on-the-wall piece behind the scenes at the D'Oyly Carte operetta ensemble.

And, ITV bosses having noted the good performance of *Airport*, the inside Heathrow show, last year, what do you get on the main commercial channel from this Friday but Airline, an obso-doc following the staff at Britannia Airways? Perhaps we should be grateful at least for the small element of lateral thinking here. They might just have given us *Gatwick*.

Faced with these dreary examples of television's tendency to imitate, execs and viewers should turn to two shining examples in the schedules of the creators of hits declining to repeat the format.

Simon Nye, writer of *Men Behaving Badly*, and David Renwick, author of *One Foot In The Grave*, both have on air at the moment their first series since these big hits changed their careers. It would have been very easy for them simply to churn out a slight variation on the stuff that made them famous. Indeed, execs were probably begging them to write *Lads Carrying On Loutishly* and *At The Gates Of The Crematorium* respectively.

In fact, commendably, both of them have struck out into new territory. Renwick's brilliant *Jonathan Creek* is a comedy thriller series in which a magician's assistant solves seemingly inexplicable crimes. Nye's *How Do You Want Me?* is another sit-com with a done-before plot — townies adjusting to country life — but risks real violence and genuine emotion in its writing. It isn't at all what critics would have expected or focus groups demanded from Nye.

Sadly, the only acknowledgement of Nye's and Renwick's initiative from telly bosses is likely to be an offer to star in a docu-soap series going behind the scenes of a hit sit-com.

'Square Eyes'

FEIN GINN

THE ANCIENT IRISH ART OF ARRANGING CHAIRS AROUND A TABLE TO HELP ACHIEVE A FEELING OF PEACE AND HARMONY.

MEDIA NEWS

HACKS and editors assembled at the Savoy for Granada's *What The Papers Say* awards lunch were unanimous in their verdict: Peter Mandelson's speech was the most peevish, petty, self-pitying whinge they had ever heard from a government minister.

Well, almost unanimous. Will Wyatt, number two at the BBC — aka the Blairite Broadcasting Corporation — apparently remembered in the nick of time that Mandelson is an old friend and ex-colleague of John Birt, Wyatt's boss.

"Wasn't that speech *brilliant*?" he gushed loyally.

Meanwhile ecstatic applause greeted *Guardian* editor Alan Rusbridger when he collected his second consecutive newspaper of the year award. Among those cheering most loudly were Granada's own executives. As well they might: the *Grauniad*'s award was recognition of its tireless investigation of liar and spanking enthusiast Jonathan Aitken — an investigation carried out in conjunction with journalists from Granada's own *World in Action*, who put together their own programme based on the affair.

Will Granada bosses now extend their generosity to *World in Action* itself, however? It seems not. Before Rubbisher had sat down, all the talk was that the programme will close and reemerge as a dumber and cheaper alternative. Hacks on the show are already applying for jobs as ITV schedulers take a long hard look at a format they think "tired".

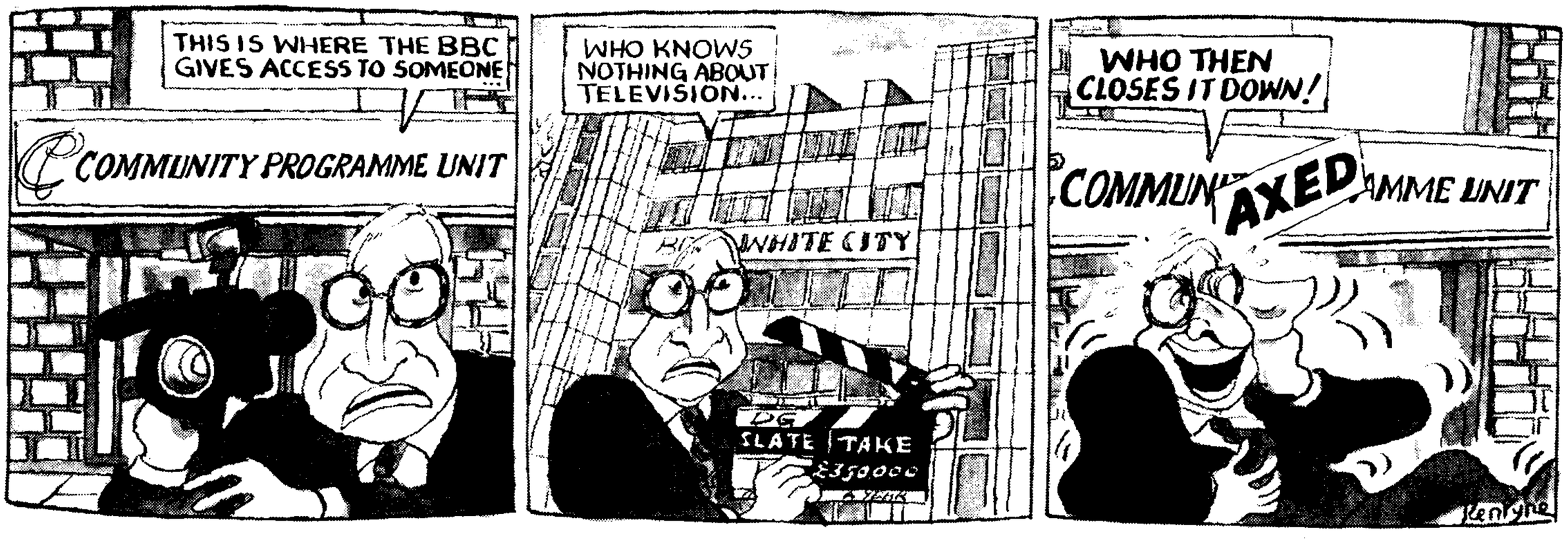
Head of factual programming at ITV Steve Anderson will be partly responsible for the new programme. He is a former editor of BBC's *Watchdog*, and industry observers fear viewers can look forward to another tiresome American-style consumer magazine show.

If so, Anderson will be negotiating with a new editor at *World in Action*. The man who replaces recently departed Steve Boulton is the former head of regional programmes at Granada, one Jeff Anderson — by an amazing coincidence, Steve's younger brother.

Plugged In

AN advertisement featuring typical readers of the *Sun*: cut to a cafe, to a building site, to a hairdresser's, and... cut to a TV studio, where the newsreader is reading the *Sun* — with the "Sky News" logo clearly in shot...

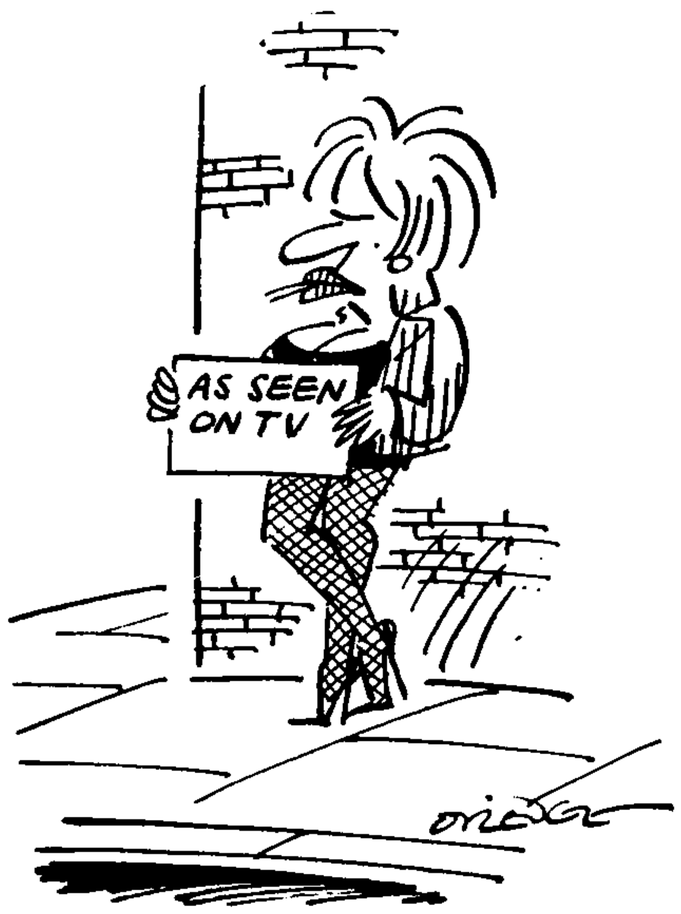
Sun TV ad, 1st March 1998



HEADLINES on the "news about the BBC" page of the BBC's corporate website are horribly predictable.

"BBC governors ensure complaints system is frank, open and faster, says BBC Chairman"... "Today's BBC is listening to its audience, says Chairman"... "Public service will remain at the heart of the BBC in the digital age..." etc, etc. What a shame the webspace ran out before the site could include any of the "news about the BBC" recently featured in old media like newspapers, radio and TV that week.

News, say, about the chairman's reaction to the slating that both Will Wyatt and Matthew Bannister got from a parliamentary committee worried about their consigning parliamentary programmes to graveyard slots. Or news, say, about the loss of the community programmes unit now merged with documentary features, which itself merged with something called leisure with the loss of 70 jobs.



ON THE BBC's *Today* programme on 25 February, Michael Meacher, environment minister, strenuously denied that the government had made a U-turn on public access to the countryside.

Labour's policy at the election was to bring in a law to force landowners to allow public access, especially on common land. On the intervention of Tony Blair, in his new role as friend of the nobility and gentry, such a law has now been "suspended" for two years while the Country Landowners Association tries to come up with a voluntary code which allows the public onto their land.

Meacher was sceptical about the CLA's control over their members. He explained: "Indeed, let me say, last Sunday I was down at Ranmore Common outside Dorking where the landowner a few years ago unilaterally revoked a deed of access which has been in place since 1929, because he wanted ramblers off his land. He's perfectly legally entitled to do that. The question I asked the Country Landowners Association yesterday is: how are you going to deal with your members who are moving in the opposite direction and who do not want to comply with what the government is seeking"?

The matter was left there. The *Today* audience were denied any further news of the Dorking landowner. They did not hear how he blocked off all paths and tracks on the 150 acres of Ranmore Common which he owns, how he sent a QC and a junior to fight local people who sought a judicial review of their rights to walk on the Common, how he won his case, and then sought an order for costs from the local people who started the action.

They did not even hear his name — Adrian White, chairman of the Biwater group of companies, and a governor of the BBC.

POOR old Lord Hollick, special adviser to the department of trade and industry, may soon need some special advice himself on how to save his crumbling United News and Media empire.

Hollick's television stations are in a particularly bad state — particularly Anglia TV, still reeling from ITV's decision to axe its pisspoor daytime show, *The Time... The Place*, hosted by dozy John Stapleton. All Anglia makes now for the ITV network is the super-tacky *Vanessa*.

The new network controller David Liddiment, troubled by ITV's downmarket image and collapsing ratings, has told colleagues that Vanessa Feltz will be the next to feel his boot up her ample backside. Giving her the heave-ho, for which he will need a crane, will appease advertisers worried that only non-spending Ds and Es watch ITV.

Meanwhile viewers tuning in for *The Time... The Place* on 13 February found a welcome note of surrealism in the doomed programme. Among the concerned parents and teenagers debating the hot topic of how to deal with errant teenagers were two Middle East dissidents, Mohammed Al-Massari and Sheikh Omar Bakri Mohammed. To have one Islamist involved in a discussion about whether to let one's daughter go to late-night parties might seem a misfortune; to have two looked like carelessness. And the source of the carelessness was revealed the following Tuesday, when the programme was devoted to the Gulf crisis — minus Al-Massari and Sheikh Omar, who had been accidentally booked for the wrong date.

Diaries don't cost that much do they? In milord Bollick's cash-strapped empire, they probably do.

THE camera team shadowing *Independent* editor Rosie Boycott for a proposed Channel 4 fly-on-the-wall documentary got some hilarious footage during the British Environment and Media Awards at the Mayfair Theatre.

Before accepting the "Newspaper of the Year" award on behalf of the *Independent on Sunday*, Boycott was recorded frantically asking her deputy Chris "Baldy" Blackhurst what she should say in her speech. Blackhurst told her to say the *Sindie*'s coverage was not just skin deep... it was deeply committed to putting environment first... etc. Whereupon Boycott got up and told the audience the paper's coverage was not just skin deep... it was deeply committed to putting environment first... etc.

The film-makers, Pendragon, were delighted with their evening's work. Shame someone left the tape in the camera and accidentally wiped it the next day.

Number crunchings

7.8% rate at which News Corp is estimated to have paid tax worldwide last year

780 number of companies in the Murdoch empire as at the end of last year

780,000,000 operating profits of News Corp last year (in pounds)

BIRTSPEAK

"SOME clarifications" in full from the BBC's 1997/8 performance review document, which should be filled in annually by programme editors so that line-managers can check they're reaching performance targets without having to watch any of the programmes. This year's buzzword: revelation.

"Unlike the Half Year Summary we've now split Revelation from Context and Analysis. This is to avoid any overlaps or confusion and to reflect the DG's interest in this objective. We define it as providing insight and illumination on a story — what Mark Damazar described as the 'ah-ha' factor. An example would be a Political Correspondent revealing to the audience the insider story on the latest twists in the Conservative leadership contest. Therefore, it's not just about counting scoops."

The real revelation is that the BBC sees insight, illumination and revelation as new objectives.

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

WHIPPED into a state of heady delight by the sixty-four year delayed "premiere" of Elgar's Third Symphony the other week, it was no doubt with high hopes that the worthy readers of BBC Music Magazine rushed to their CD players, newly released recording of this year's six Masterprize finalists in hand.

This £20,000 first prize competition for a new orchestral work has been hyped by its founder, John McLaren, as leading us out of the Birtwistlian desert and into the promised land of "approachable" and "accessible" music "of lasting value".

Those who read the accompanying articles, however, will have been disabused of their optimism even before pressing START.

"We write the music we do because we like it," said finalist Stephen Hartke. Oh dear, no sign of concern for the audience there.

"I only relaxed when a friend suggested that I challenge any critic to sing its melodies," said another, Andrew March, of his score *Marine à travers les arbres*. "At which point I realised they couldn't be sung." Ah.

"A long section with harsh falling chromatic motifs brings a gradual rise in intensity, but nothing prepares us for the impressive entry of the anvils," warns the programme note for Victoria Borisova-Ollas.

Oh well, back to Radiohead. They, at least, like Elgar, write a good tune.

SPONSORSHIP

RICHARD BRANSON'S confusion about the evils of tobacco continues.

In December *Eye* 939 noted that despite his loud demands for a total ban on tobacco advertising following the Formula One fiasco, his Virgin FM radio station still regularly advertised cigars — and that he is notorious for cadging fags from visitors.

It also seems to have escaped his notice that the London Broncos rugby league side is through to the fifth round of the Silk Cut Challenge Cup — the rugby league equivalent of the FA Cup, the Wembley final of which is screened live by the BBC.

Virgin is the largest shareholder in the Broncos and players wear Virgin logos on their shirts. Surely a state of affairs that cannot be tolerated much longer by the great anti-smoking campaigner.

Diana balls

"IN our unconscious psyche Diana seems to combine the travail of Christ with the compassion of our Lady... Diana's *Panorama* interview may in time become, by transmutation, her message from the mountain... For those of us who are psychotherapists, we recognised that in her choice of unsuitable men, Diana was in thrall to repetition compulsion. We suspected as we learned of the circumstances of Diana's death... that Diana's suicidal susceptibility may well have re-surfaced on that fateful last day... We struggle with the death instinct in all its forms of displacement, envy, contempt, omnipotence, *schadenfreude*, pathological narcissism... Diana is the embodiment of the feminine: she expresses, in movement and gesture, presence, physicality, connectedness... the "It to It" relationship and the "I to Thou" relationship that Diana so poignantly lived in her person. The schizoid spectre has replaced the fullness of faith. That is the condition of modernity."

Extract from "Diana: a postscript" by Bryan Jobbins – Kleinian psychotherapist and Christian Marxist – in the British Association for Counselling's journal *Counselling* (Feb. 1998). *Submitted by Val Harding*

DOWN ON THE FARM

WHILE the preparations were going on for the great countryside march, the propaganda war over public access reached its peak. The Country Landowners Association revealed its trump card, a carefully contrived Gallup poll which they claim shows strong support for "managed access arrangements", code for "we manage not to give any".

A huge 80 per cent of people wanted more access, but about half would be concerned about safety and getting lost if allowed to wander freely on moorland, giving the delighted CLA an excuse not to allow it. But a third prefer their own routes, so that is still 15 million adults who would welcome the right to roam. Worse, the landowners have been claiming the moral high ground over environmental protection, which has turned hardened conservationists green over their porridge.

At least the CLA pays lip-service to more access, unlike one bastion of old-style rhetoric. *Farming News* refers to walkers as "urban itinerants" and "froths". "If these anorak-clad louts and lassies want to lord it over other people's land, they should either pay for the privilege or confine themselves to municipal parks run at ratepayers' expense." Like Hyde Park, perhaps, whose ratepayers may now be less happy to lend their land unless there is some chance of the favour being returned.

THE popularity of the bone-in-beef ban has encouraged MAFF to have another go at closing down the unpasteurised milk industry.

Following a committee recommendation Jeff Rooker, the minister responsible for food safety, announced a consultation period. Strangely, the consultees included Coca-Cola, better known for selling dilute phosphoric acid, but no actual producers of green top milk.

It could be seen as the usual public health versus personal choice, with the nannies of Whitehall determined to decide. But milk carries a negligible serious risk to health, and pasteurisation is not a reliable means of killing what nasties there may be, although it does wipe out nearly all the beneficial bacteria and enzymes, as well as vitamins, proteins and minerals which make raw milk such a healthy food.

The obsession with infectious agents, from which this advisory committee makes its living, is misplaced. *E.coli* and salmonella are universal, and breed new strains rapidly. It is exposure to such bacteria which gives us immunity, not efforts by boffins to make all our food utterly sterile.

'Gumboot'

"We love the country life — huntin', shootin', fishin', marchin'..."

DOING THE ROUNDS

ON 4 March, 1996, Arnold Verral wrote a letter about his late father's treatment to Mr M Walledge, complaints co-ordinator at Harlow's Princess Alexandra Hospital (see *Eye* 900).

On 14 November 1997, more than 20 months later, he received the final report of an independent review panel from acting chief executive Margaret Berry. Mr Verral had complained about the fact that although his father was assessed on arrival by a nurse as "Priority 2" — to be seen by a doctor within an hour — he wasn't actually seen for six hours (two in a corridor, four in a cubicle). Mr Verral knew his father was already seriously ill, and had been investigated for deteriorating kidney function. However, when he repeatedly stressed that his father had been unable to tolerate any food or drink for several days, he was told that no action could be taken before he saw a doctor. Rehydration was not commenced until six-and-a-half hours after arrival, by which time he was in acute renal failure. He was then transferred to the Royal London Hospital for dialysis and then to Barts' intensive care unit, where he died shortly afterwards.

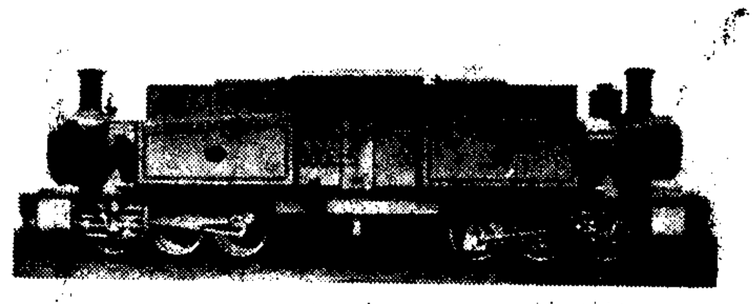
In its defence, the hospital pointed out that the on-call medical team had 42 emergency admissions to manage during that particular 24-hour period. But no guidelines for managing acute renal failure had been circulated to the casualty department and no record could be traced of the patient's fluid balance chart or any further nurse assessment of his deteriorating state in the six hours before he was seen by the doctor. The hospital has subsequently instigated several changes to improve the emergency admissions procedure.

How much comfort this will provide to the Verral family is unclear. Despite the Patients' Charter right to be treated with "dignity and privacy", his last few hours were anything but. His "right to receive emergency treatment at any time" was clearly overlooked. And the fact that it took 20 months for the final report to come through (albeit with profuse apologies) has done little to resolve Mr Verral's anger or grief. Alas, with the closure of the A&E department at nearby St Margaret's hospital, Epping, the Princess Alexandra is under even more pressure. There can be no guarantee it won't happen again.

● Dr A Gaitonde, consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist at East Surrey Priority [*sic*] Care NHS trust has sent a depressing letter to local GPs about the child and family consultation service. "Due to staff shortages, we are having difficulty seeing new cases as promptly as we would wish. Our nurse specialist is off on maternity leave, a doctor is off on sick leave for four months from early February and our clinical psychologist has recently left the service. I myself will be retiring at the end of July..."

The time taken to get an initial hospital appointment has traditionally not been included in the waiting list figures for fear of making everyone too depressed about the NHS. Addenbrookes Hospital's "waiting to be seen" list for October 1997 makes particularly grisly reading. Outpatient waiting times are divided into "soon" and "routine". For example, a routine appointment with Drs Ponder or MacKay in cancer genetics is 52 weeks away, for Dr Ewan's allergy clinic it is 54 weeks. Dr Norris's skin clinic sees general problems routinely in 65 weeks but can squeeze a "soon" in at 53. ENT with Mr Gray is 40 weeks in either category. Most specialities have alarming waits, but the prize belongs to Mr R Villar for hip and knee referrals: 156 weeks "routine", ditto "soon". Is this a record, Mr Dobson?

M.D.



SIGNAL FAILURES

THE planned flotation of MTL Trust Holdings this spring should delight anyone who pines for the days when fat wads of public money were regularly stuffed into private pockets.

The bus company gained two rail franchises last year on breathtaking terms that guarantee them a huge income regardless of whether their performance is crap — which, not surprisingly, it is.

No rail passengers in Britain, not even customers of Virgin or Connex, can have suffered more as a result of privatisation than commuters in West Yorkshire.

The office of passenger rail franchising (Opraf) decided to punish them by awarding the Regional Railways North East (RRNE) franchise to MTL. A fortnight later the pressure group Save Our Railways obtained a leaked document indicating MTL had won the franchise with a business plan based on a huge redundancy programme. "These horrendous cutbacks will leave the railway desperately understaffed," warned the group, only for its concerns to be pooh-poohed by officials.

Less than a year later, a report for the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority (PTA) reveals: "Since the start of the franchise over 5,500 trains have been cancelled throughout or have only run for part of their journey. Problems began in March 1997 when 83 drivers were allowed to retire. The effects of the traincrew shortage still continue."

After nearly nine months of unspeakable disruption to its customers, MTL advertised for new drivers. Even then it had not learnt humility. A spokesman said the initial loss of 83 drivers had taken the company "to the level of staff required to operate our services" and suggested extra drivers were now needed only because some had moved to other companies and others were off sick.

● MEANWHILE, Merseyside PTA's initial concerns over MTL gaining the local franchise (Opraf insisted on awarding it to the lowest bidder regardless of other considerations) were being borne out. The PTA complained of serious overcrowding — yet many of the trains which the PTA bought when BR ran the network are being kept out of service by MTL. Latest figures show that in November only 88.1 percent of Northern Line services and 91.9 percent of Wirral services ran on time (the passenger's charter target is 95 percent). While Britain's other franchise holders have agreed new working conditions with drivers, MTL is embroiled in drivers' strikes that have lasted for several months.

Reports of poor performance and strikes on Merseyside should not worry potential shareholders. Falling revenue on the trains would not affect MTL's income, but cheesed-off passengers might try the buses, where every penny in revenue counts for the operators. The majority of Merseyside buses are operated by, er, MTL.

HUSBAND
You can't go for an interview with trousers creased like that
Come here and I'll iron them
You've got to start smartening up

Rotten Boroughs

Newark and Sherwood

MORE nonsense in Newark where Labour has suspended council leader Gill Dawn following allegations that she received bottles of perfume and brandy from a property developer in return for help with planning applications.

Now a further investigation is under way into a party raffle organised by Dawn and her Labour chums on the council. Normally the best prize one can expect from such draws is a box of After Eight and a bottle of Beaujolais. The first prize in Dawn's raffle, however, was a holiday for two on the Costa Del Crime (Marbella) and a colour TV for the runner-up.

So how did Newark Labour party suddenly become so rich? Although the prizes were marked "anonymous", the *Eye* can reveal that the kind benefactor was Newcastle property developer Russell Foster, whose largesse clearly had nothing to do with a large number of contentious planning applications he's submitted to the local council.

By an amazing coincidence Dawn, Foster and others have recently been seen getting tired and emotional at the White Swan hostelry in Newark. By another remarkable coincidence, Foster used to be business partner of Dennis Thompson, the property developer who wrote to the Labour party claiming he had given Dawn gifts for help with planning applications.

Labour, keen to clean up town hall sleaze, wants to know why things are so bad in Newark & Sherwood. There are 50 district councils in the East Midlands, yet more than half the planning applications called in by the government come from just one authority — Newark & Sherwood. With this in mind, and while Dawn's future is sorted out, Labour has welcomed the appointment of the new acting council leader, Cllr Hector Whelan... chair of the planning committee!

Bent-Minster

RUBBISH collector Onyx has spread its tentacles across London, but its most contentious contract is with Brent.

Back in 1994 it bought Alperton depot from the Tory-run council under Bent chief executive Charles Woods. The cash — equivalent to a £65 saving for each council taxpayer — was handy, especially since elections were just around the corner. But councillors, including Labour's John Duffy, queried the generous rubbish-collecting contract Onyx received at the time.

An internal audit later found that extra benefits received by Onyx in the contract had cost the borough at least £500,000. The then head of environmental services was one Tony Lear.

Money lost by Bent in the deal had to be negotiated back from the rubbish company via Onyx's Mike Butler. Again pressure was applied by Cllr Duffy. When a position became vacant in Bent's environmental services department, Butler applied. Despite his close commercial association with Onyx, with whom the council was still negotiating, his application was successful. Unfortunately for Butler, the day after he got the job a Tory councillor died, allowing Labour into power. The job offer was swiftly withdrawn with encouragement from Cllr Duffy.

Duffy's day job is enforcement manager in Westminster council's environmental services department, where Bent's former director Tony Lear is now planning and environment director. Onyx has been Westminster's rubbish collector since 1995. Now a new post has been created under Lear. Price Waterhouse and its consultant, former Bent chief executive Charles Woods, advised the council on the best man for the job. Who is the lucky candidate? Step forward Mike Butler.

Duffy, surrounded by former Bent men, has been told that a departmental restructuring will leave his position, er, obsolete.

PS: Onyx has just received more than £600,000 in additions to its original Westminster contract.

Glasgow

Deirdre Gaughan, one of the Labour councillors caught up in the trips-for-votes scam that has brought the city to its knees, has suffered a setback trying to clear her name.

Labour officials have discovered that her sister-in-law, Irene Gaughan, signed cheques worth £230 that enabled 20 people to join the Ibrox Labour Party branch where she is membership secretary and Deirdre is a councillor. Under party rules multiple applications are outlawed, mainly to prevent those with a fat cheque book establishing power bases.

Her sister-in-law's actions do not necessarily implicate councillor Deirdre, but they have not helped in an area where the 1995 selection battle between former Glasgow MP Mike Watson and his replacement, the now disgraced Mohammad Sarwar, was marred by allegations of multiple applications. Nor has the situation been improved by Irene's assertions that there was nothing untoward about the applications as "all the 20 wanted to join".

Party bosses hoping to discipline Gaughan may have a problem. Her membership has lapsed and no action can be taken against her! Nevertheless the scandal will run as Labour officials have asked branch officers across the city to contact members at random and ask if they've paid their own membership fees.

In The Dock 1

WHEN the *Eye*'S favourite Enfield councillor Richard Course was found guilty of careless driving, the outspoken Course, who once described members of a residents' group as "unwashed, hysterical, hate-filled women", was completely lost for words.

Campaigners brought the case against him, alleging that he had deliberately driven at them when they were crossing a road. The magistrate told Course: "You cannot run people over. Your attitude towards people crossing the road shows a complete lack of consideration." Course says he will appeal and that "it was a controlled, extremely skilful piece of driving".

Hackney

HETTIE PETERS, the former chair of Hackney social services who exposed the Mark Trotter paedophile scandal, has been forced to resign as a councillor after she was declared bankrupt.

The cause of her bankruptcy lies with those in Hackney who conspired to defame her good character by alleging that not only did she run a brothel, but also that she was guilty of claiming housing benefit fraudulently. Inspector Knacker investigated the allegations against her for more than a year and a subsequent court appearance led to all charges being thrown out.

Despite her innocence the fight to clear her name took its toll on her finances and she was left with no option but to stand down when she was declared bankrupt last month.

In The Dock 2

NEW Labour is alive and well in Ashford, where Melanie Beavis-Schiller, a Labour councillor, has been fired for gross misconduct by her local Sainsbury's.

While working as a cashier she took part in a scam involving the company's loyalty cards, which award customers points for goods bought. Once they've built up points to a value of £2.50 or more, customers can redeem them for air miles or goods. Beavis-Schiller was found to have registered points in her name that had not been collected by customers.

As the scheme "belongs only to Sainsbury's or the customer to whom they are awarded and are not transferable", Beavis-Schiller stood accused of theft. She was escorted from the premises by police and received an official caution. Leader of Ashford borough council Labour group Mike Hayes, came down hard on his errant colleague. "Melanie has always been a hard-working councillor... The issue has no effect on the council and I hope the people in her ward will be understanding."

Pseuds Corner

If the Spice Girls represented girl power, then All Saints are girl worry, right down to their Woody Allen shoulder-shrug dance. I am suspicious of myself for loving it so much. Never Ever appeals to the masochist in all women, tells them that it's permissible, attractive even, to be pathetic. It is Bridget Jones as pop, an insidious swinging beat take on Kiergegaard's maxim "anxiety is freedom".

EMMA FORREST
Guardian

Law As Art, Gary Bagnall, The Queen's University of Belfast

"Law as Art" presents a radical new legal theory, the "Law as Art Hypothesis", which conceives law, not as a system of rules, but as a distinctive kind of art work. Law is differentiated as art by the "Law as Compound Type Hypothesis", which uses the heuristic metaphor of the Operatic Music Drama to develop an idea of legal art as a distinctive empowered text. This concept is supported by the arts of drama, painting, sculpture, dress-design, architecture, rhetoric and communication, to form an elementally developed, integrated unitary art work.

Ashgate publishers' catalogue

On The Eve

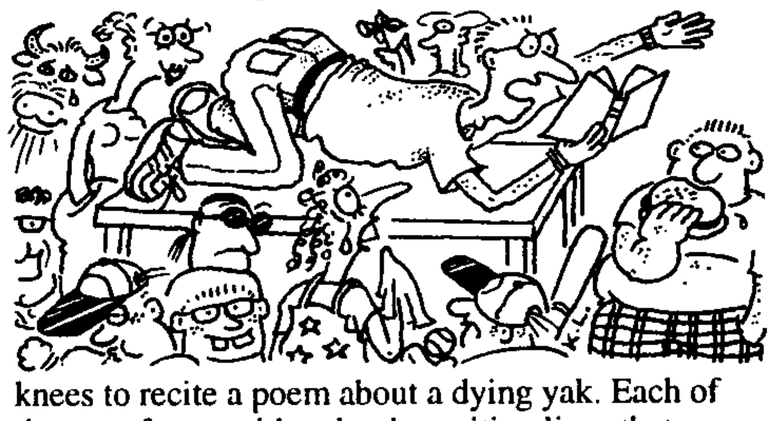
There are some words best not said;
Best not said, not even to the dead,
For they feed an evil
They feed an evil monster's head.

The monster's name is war
And it keeps on craving more.
Once started, war never really ends
Once started now, a millennial shadow descends.

Beware, beware war's savagery.
Beware of ravenous demons set free
When, on the eve of battle,
The words are whispered: WORLD WAR THREE.

BEN OKRI
Guardian

Each student starts off by reciting a poem from memory, the sort of impressive but old-fashioned skill that is rare among college students in America today. Mikolaj Kocikowski, an intense Polish-born student who emigrated to Pennsylvania in his early teens, clambers up on to the table on his hands and



knees to recite a poem about a dying yak. Each of them performs with aplomb, reciting lines that range from Henry V to a scatological poem about a fart smelling like the "marriage of a fish head and an avocado".

Sunday Telegraph Magazine account of elite "Deep Springs" college, California

"You can be fairly certain too that Ferdinand de Saussure did not have the battle between Britain's girl bands in mind when he set out his linguistic theory of difference, but the same principles apply. We can only ever know what something is by understanding what it is not. And the four members of All Saints are definitely not the Spice Girls."

VANESSA THORPE
Independent on Sunday

CONTRIBUTORS: Tim Ryder, I.R. Ward, Anon, Peta Chow, Anon.

£10 paid for entries.

ART NEWS

TIMOTHY "Tim O'Shanter" Clifford has hit the headlines again, this time for lending a large number of artworks from his National Galleries of Scotland to the ever-popular Lord Irvine of Lairg.

"It is perfectly normal for galleries to lend works of art to politicians," Clifford insists. Maybe; but it far from normal for galleries to do so when their experts advise against it — as happened in this case.

The NGS's head of conservation, John Dick, pointed out that works on paper are usually shown for only three months at a time to avoid damage from exposure to light. Clifford is lending the NGS's prints for three years. "I am the director and I make the decisions... I am an expert on graphic material," he explains tetchily.

Interesting, then, given his great expertise in graphics, that recently 1,000 of the Italian drawings in his care at the NGS — including works by Raphael and Leonardo — were found to be in boxes covered in mould and affected by damp.

The damaged drawings are currently in the conservation department "drying out". But they haven't received the attention they require — because top priority has to be given to mounting and framing the works lent to the lord chancellor. Why?

The answer is helpfully provided by Clifford himself, who tells the *Scotsman* that the pictures loaned to Irvine "would be seen in handsome surroundings by a host of powerful politicians and individuals who might be encouraged to do the National Galleries a good turn".

One such good turn in the offing is the £18m Clifford wants from the heritage lottery fund to open a "Gallery of Scottish Art" in Glasgow. When he first cooked up this mad idea, in the early 1990s, it met with almost universal condemnation — not least because the plan would have meant the closure of the well-respected Scottish Portrait Gallery. Besides, as several critics pointed out, Clifford's own national galleries in Edinburgh are themselves meant to be a showcase of Scottish art.

In May 1994 the then Scottish secretary Ian Lang put the kibosh on Clifford's plan by refusing to contribute any public money to its running costs. But Clifford pressed on regardless. In 1996 he found a site for his white elephant — the old post office HQ in George Square, Glasgow — and applied for £30m of lottery dosh. Alas! The lottery fund rejected the application on the ground that the gallery was too large, had no obvious purpose and no secure source of funding.

The incorrigible Clifford then bunged in yet another application, which will be considered by the heritage lottery fund later this month. This was submitted on the very day that Angus Grossart, a great supporter of Clifford, yielded place as chairman of the NGS trustees to Lady Airlie, who is vehemently opposed to the Glasgow project.

The Glasgow folly is also opposed by the entire staff of the National Galleries (except Clifford), all the officials of the heritage lottery fund and all the relevant civil servants at the Scottish office. Why, then, has it refused to die? Because of pressure from two Cabinet ministers, Scottish secretary Donald Dewar and Lord Irvine, both of whom are Glaswegians who have publicly declared their support. In the hope of isolating Lady Airlie, Dewar has lately been packing the National Galleries' board of trustees with his own allies and placemen, including his close friend Lord Gordon of Strathblane.

If the lottery trustees yield to political pressure, they will clearly have compromised their independence since the principal questions asked by their officials in December 1996 are still unanswered.

Will the heritage lottery fund give £18m of public money to a project which does not have the support of the chairwoman of the organisation that is seeking the money and which has no defined purpose? It seems likely that it will — not least because the chairman of the lottery fund, Lord Rothschild, is well disposed towards the idea.

Rothschild retires from his post on 31 March and will be replaced by Eric Anderson, Tony Blair's old housemaster from Fettes — who, in spite of his Blairite connection, is said to be unimpressed by the antics of the Glasgow political mafia. But by the time he arrives, the die will have been cast. By an odd coincidence, the fate of the Glasgow gallery will be decided on 19 March at Rothschild's last meeting.

Letters

Weapons cover up

Sir,

*Bill Clinton (*EYE *cover, 20 Feb) is not quite correct when he says that the US sold Saddam chemical/biological weapons. The US certainly supplied them — including, apparently, Prussian Blue, which destroys the filters in chem/biol protective suits. But Saddam reneged on the deal and got the stuff for nothing. I believe it is called "Third World aid".*

PAT RATTIGAN,

Chesterfield.

Hollow Claim

Sir,

Re: Safety in Numbers (Letters, EYE *943). S.S.J. Robertson's smug claim for credit for reducing the number of deaths caused by falls from trains with slam doors rings very hollow with those of us whose relatives have been killed in this way.*

My sister was killed four years ago in a fall from an Inter-City train. These trains **now** *have central locking. Had this been compulsory and introduced regardless of the "cost", as was the case in other parts of Europe, she would be alive. The gradual introduction of such safety measures on a "cost-effective" basis may well reduce the number of fatalities over time: but there is very little to take credit for.*

I found Robertson's comments insensitive, to put it mildly. A little more humility would be appropriate.

Yours faithfully,
DUNCAN MITCHELL,

Bishopston, Bristol.

One angry man

Sir,

Although "Slicker" does well to criticise (In the City, EYE *944) the way that trials for serious fraud are currently conducted, he is most assuredly striking at the wrong target when he criticises juries who still remain, for my money, the ultimate bastions of democracy and justice.*

I have to declare an interest and say that I feel more than somewhat personally insulted by his statement that "...for fraud trials the jury is never of the defendant's peers but his social educational and professional inferiors". For sheer cheek and arrogance this rivals anything that might have been said or written by, for example Michael Howard! More years ago than I can remember, I sat as a member of a jury trying a case of serious fraud. On the first day of the trial, we were warned that it was going to be very long — and it was — I happened to be sitting in the front of the jury box wearing a suit and tie. This made it inevitable that I was elected as foreman for such a white collar crime. I was working in the finance industry at that time, but certainly as I recall none of the other jurors had any such experience. They came from a wide range of backgrounds, socially, educationally, and occupationally. There was a wide spread of ages from, I would judge, early twenties to late sixties, and both men and women. It's true that we did not go as low down the social and educational scale as journalism.

I was deeply impressed by the ability of all these jurors to grasp the nature of the detailed and complex evidence which was presented to us over many weeks.

Shame on you "Slicker", and shame on PRIVATE EYE. *You of all people should be supporting the jury system, you never know when you may be facing "12 good people and true".*

Regards,
ROY DENT,

Via e-mail.

Poor lunatic

Sir,

Many of the articles in your magazine poke fun at people who, it can be argued, have mental health problems — John Redwood and Piers Morgan for example. However, I believe that your "Funny Old World" column over-stepped the mark in EYE *944.*

The piece reprinted from the SALISBURY JOURNAL *was about a man who, suffering a delusion that he was very wealthy, gave away most of his life savings. I presume that you thought this was in some way funny but I can see no humour in it whatsoever. One would not dream of laughing at someone with a physical disability and there is no reason why those with other forms of illness should suffer the same humiliation. The inclusion of that article was tasteless.*

I'm afraid that on this occasion PRIVATE EYE *has let itself down.*

Yours faithfully,
JAMES THOMAS,

Lakeside, Cardiff.

Lookalike

Deedes

Weeto

Sir,

It's a shame that a great reporter, distinguished editor and former MP should be reduced to promoting breakfast cereal. Couldn't Lord Copper and Lord Gnome get together charitably so W.H. Deedes didn't have to impersonate Professor Weeto to earn a crust?

Yours etc,
NICK RANKING,

London WC2.

LUVVIES

"For me, playing James Bond is like playing Macbeth in the theatre. I'll say more: if I hadn't acted Shakespeare, Pirandello, Euripides — in short what is classed as 'serious theatre', I should never have managed to play James Bond. It's not so easy that role."

SEAN CONNERY
Daily Express (1967)

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

A refusenik writes

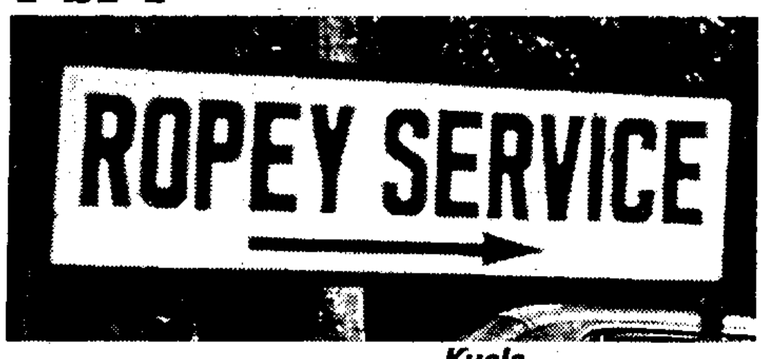
Sir,

It was nice to read that Paul Routledge and his old employer, Murdoch's TIMES, *are getting on so well these days (Letters, 20 February). The last time I saw him, he and I shared a platform at St Bride's Institute, he a sacked* TIMES *south-east Asia correspondent and I a humble but equally sacked proof reader. Neither of us would go to Wapping and the purpose of the meeting was to slag off Murdoch, his bullying of journalists, his duplicity and his union-busting tactics.*

Yours sincerely,
JOHN BAILEY,

Managing Editor, ProPublishing Ltd, NW1.

I-SPY



Kuala Terengarau

Cairo

Submitted by **Mike Connelly** and **G.C. Gamm.** £10 paid for submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Burning issue

Sir,

Re: The Millennium Dome. I wonder if you have more influence than I and can find out a vital fact about this structure. I was not successful and can't seem to get a reply: What is the flame point of the plastic cover and how will the firemen reach it when it burns, as most exhibition halls eventually do (Crystal Palace, Alexandra Palace [twice] etc)?

Yours,
FREDDY LIEBREICH MA,

London W3.

Dirty Mac operator

Sir,

You silly things have no knowledge of newspaper technology (EYE 944). Independent writers do not use a database system for their stories. It is impossible to monitor their progress electronically. They work hard. So do I, and I certainly have no time to roam the Internet.

M. PILGRIM,

The Independent

Red whine

Sir,

In Hackwatch (EYE 944) your correspondent quotes James Whitaker referring knowingly to Romance Conti, widely regarded as the world's greatest red wine. There is **shurely shome mistake**. *The correct name of this celebrated and expensive red burgundy is Romanée-Conti.*

I trust the errant "c" was Mr Whitaker's faux pas and not that of your august organ?

Yours faithfully,
DR D.E. PARRY,

Jakarta, Indonesia.

Tomato sauce

Sir,

Hackwatch (EYE 944) on the Fat Red Tomato reminded me of an incident last summer, when I had the misfortune to be standing near "Lycopersicon Vulgaris" as it remonstrated with a hapless ticket clerk at Turnham Green underground.

After an altercation which few would have failed to notice, the tired and emotional fruit pompously roared "Do you know who I am?"

For one more accustomed to Claridges, Romance [sic — see 'Red Whine', above] Conti '71 and Zermatt, the traumas of queuing for a Tube ticket with mere mortals and MIRROR readers must have been too much for the poor thing.

JOHN CHUDLEIGH,

Chiswick W4.

Stirling stuff

Sir,

Sorry, Stirling University has many admirable qualities but, unlike the city itself, it is **NOT** *ancient. This is reflected in its degrees (eg, Fishfarming with French). It* **IS** *a pre-1992 one, therefore technically "old", but is very much a modern landscaped set of concrete blocks, all built together in an attractive integrated hillside setting. Well designed, good facilities, good Arts Centre, etc. As Glasgow school brats our teachers were horrified that any of us should wish to apply to Stirling when we could apply to Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen or St Andrews. We all said: "But that's just being snobbish". And they said: "Yes, it is, and that's how the world is, and you don't give yourself any disadvantage in life if you can avoid it, so don't apply to Stirling…"*

I went to Aberdeen, but my friend Paul went to Stirling anyway and the sky didn't fall in.

Sorry, it's not "fishfarming", it's "aquaculture".

Best wishes,
SHEILA BRÉLIVET,

Via e-mail.

Old folks, no homes

Sir,

I have read the letter from Councillor Sandy Bruce-Lockhart in your current edition referring to Kent's Homes for the Elderly. While it is true that Liberal Democrat Councillors voted last year to close six of our homes, this was in order to reinvest the capital receipt in repairing the remaining homes.

It is true that the Chesterton report was distributed as soon as it was printed, on 16 October 1997. My point, made in Social Services Committee the previous week, was that members were asked to approve the recommendations of the Chesterton report, and to invoke closure procedures for all Kent Homes for the Elderly without sight of the Chesterton report on which the Committee paper was based.

At the crucial time, this report was kept secret.

Yours faithfully,
MARGARET FEATHERSTONE,

Liberal Democrat Spokesman on Social Services, Kent County Council.

"Someone blew it up"

Toe-curling

Sir,

There must be thousands of people who were actually pleased to see women's curling at peak time on BBC TV.

It's a fascinating game and hasn't it been wonderful for a whole two weeks to see women performing brilliantly at a variety of sports; such a change, but rather a disappointment for all those laddish male chauvinist sports writers like "Square Eyes".

Yours faithfully,
ENA WORDSWORTH,

Marlborough, Wilts.

Sir,

"Square Eyes" suggests that the Dirty Digger's Sky sports channels have superior presenters "who would be high on the BBC's shopping list". That may be so, but the presentation of cricket is ruined by the too-frequent advertising spots. If he weren't so greedy he could confine them to drinks, lunch and tea breaks and so avoid interrupting the changes of ends, which allow the viewer to observe changes in the field placings, etc. After all, movies are shown without a break, which is a real advantage over ITV and Channels 4 and 5.

Sincerely,
ALAN EARNEY,

Ealing W13.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"… and that bronze medal is worth its weight in gold."
DAVID COLEMAN, BBC
(James Beecher)

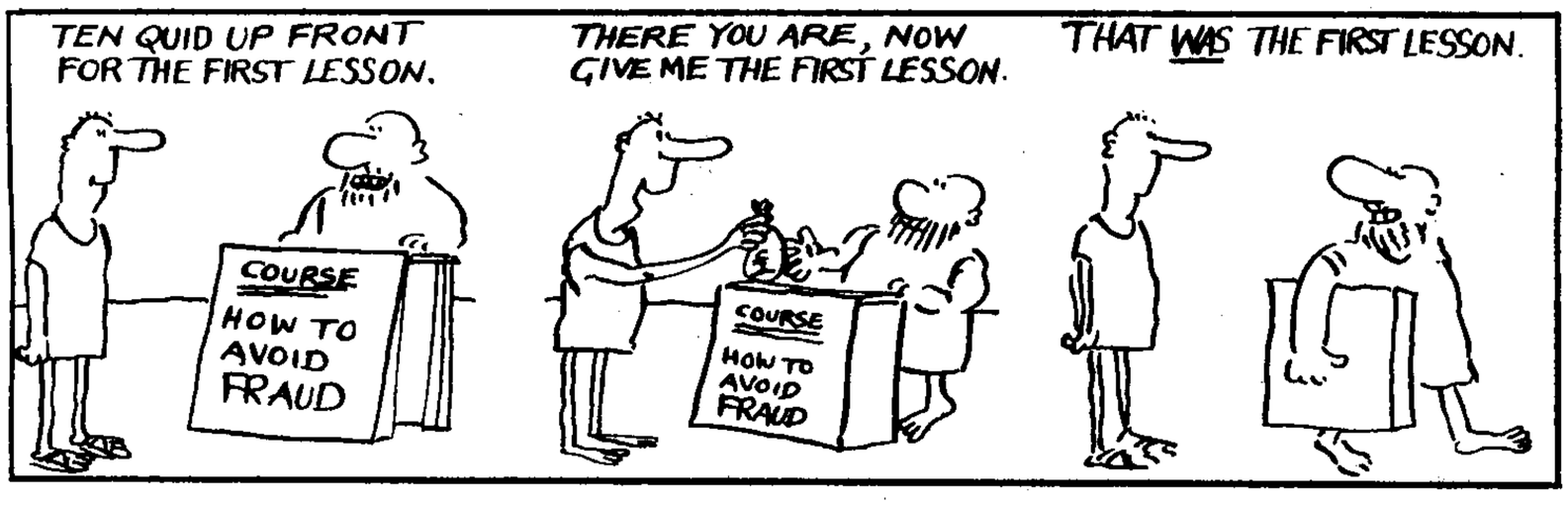
"It's like the Alamo for Dunfermline. They're waiting for General Custer to appear."
DEREK JOHNSTONE, Radio Clyde
(Chris O'Neill)

"There's a snap about Liverpool that just isn't there!"
RON ATKINSON, ITV
(Brian Hawkins)

Chris Tarrant: *How old is she?*
Caller: *Three and a half.*
Chris Tarrant: *Is it the terrible twos then?*
Capital Radio
(Alick Whitfield)

"Okay, so we lost, but good things can come from it — negative and positive…"
GLEN HODDLE
(Colin Brown)

HOM SAP BY DAVID AUSTIN


TEN QUID UP FRONT FOR THE FIRST LESSON.
COURSE HOW TO AVOID FRAUD
THERE YOU ARE, NOW GIVE ME THE FIRST LESSON.
COURSE HOW TO AVOID FRAUD
THAT WAS THE FIRST LESSON.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

O "Hello my loyal readers. This is your old friend Park Choon-ho, with another 'Talking About Toilets' column. Did you know that Japan had public toilets 300 years earlier than any other country in the world? Unlike Europeans, who put their toilets at the back of the house, the Japanese used to put them at the front, so that passers-by could also relieve themselves. But this was not simple human kindness, dear me no. Before chemical fertilizer came to be used on farms, farmers couldn't do without discharges by humans. In some rural areas of Japan, farmers even provided free board and lodging for travellers, so long as the traveller shitted in their toilet. If they were constipated, they had to pay! Ha ha!

"The Japanese also had the world's first public coin-toilets, which often led to amusing competitions. One man set up a public coin-toilet in front of his house. Then a more business-minded, clever competitor erected one alongside it. And, to make sure he got all the customers, he put a coin in his neighbour's toilet, went inside, and stayed there all day!

"Wishing you many happy and regular bowel movements, Park Choon-ho." *(The Korea Times, 28/12/97. Spotter: Anon)*

—O—

O *"People always laugh when they first hear about mpanama," said chairman Julius Ocen, as he addressed the inaugural meeting of the Association of Mpanama Sufferers in Moroto. "But when they actually meet someone whose scrotum has swollen up to the size of a basketball, they start to become more sympathetic to us."*

Later, Teso Okello explained how the disease had affected his life: "Mpanama is always worst in the rainy season. During those months, my scrotum triples in size, and everyone can hear the water sloshing about inside as I walk. I have been ridiculed by children and drunkards because of my ailment, and because my abeyi [eggs] move up and down with a loud and disturbing wobble. I cannot farm my land, because my scrotum becomes so large that I cannot bend. The only cure is an operation, but that costs Shs50,000, and I cannot afford that. Mpanama is a terrible disease, not as bad as cancer but worse than tuberculosis and a lot worse than gut rot. The government should make the operation free for everyone."

However, some older mpanama sufferers were outraged to hear their condition described as a disease. "In my village, mpanama is still a symbol of prestige" said one. "Elderly women love it. And the more my scrotum swells, the more attractive they think I am." (The Monitor [Uganda], 10/12/97. Spotter: Ben Williams)

—O—

O "These must be two of the fastest arrests we've ever made," a spokesman for the Muar Police Criminal Investigation Division told reporters, "because the thieves could hardly have made it easier for us when they robbed Madam Han Ah Su's photographic studio.

"They wanted to get her alone, so they made a booking to have some portrait photos taken. They said they needed them in a hurry, and would wait while they were processed.

After Madam Han had taken the photos, her assistant went down to the laboratory to develop them, and the two men seized their opportunity. They attacked Madam Han while she was alone, tied her up, stole the week's takings, and fled.

"The assistant found Madam Han a few minutes later, when he came back from the lab with the negatives. He untied her, and called us. By the time we got to the studio, he'd already run off two dozen prints of both men, full face and profile. We distributed the pictures, and picked both men up at the bus station about ten minutes later. If only every case was this simple." *(Straits Times 29/12/97. Spotter: Chris Boughton)*

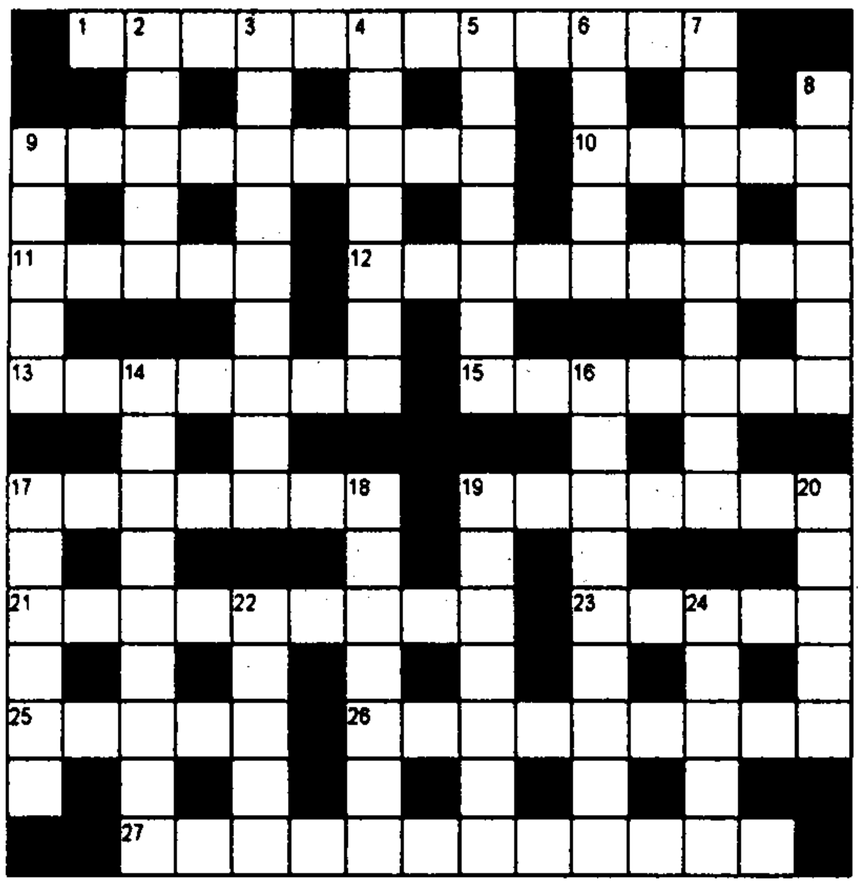
COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

The Lottery Winners

TURNER

EYE CROSSWORD 100

by Cyclops — *£100 prize*



ACROSS

1 This particular thing you're doing, it's but a small fraction of the whole (3,9)
9 Famous bunch of characters get laid, equalling Cyclops's tally (4,5)
10 Jack heard to cosy up to Labour leader — regard this as idle introspection (5)
11 Arse-over-tip shag alternative for Andy possibly? (5)
12 Expert writer on sex: "Yes!" (9)
13 Bell's acquiring one other type of drink (7)
15 Queen Brenda, briefly in court proceedings, charges the provinces (7)
17 Dick getting hard — are kinks to be found in our smalls? (3,4)
19 Pine for Nice break? (7)
21 West Indies: doctor seduced — court action takes place here (9)
23 Blair has no yen to get in an elevated position — something now achieved by Cyclops (3-2)
25 "Oh back off Nelson" — one way of expressing a relationship (5)
26 Agitates ulcer, goes in for bondage — actions of a sadist? (9)
27 Princess Margaret as farcically impersonated by some bloke in drag? (8,4)

DOWN

2 The working man's vice, stuffing sailors (5)
3 The South-East line-dancing undoer of Maggie (9)
4 In a zone blitzed by a would-be Hitler? (3-4)
5 Not all green terrapins manage repeated penetration (2-5)
6 Aussie beast doing porridge (5)
7 Shag — and ensure you never do it again! (4,2,3)
8 Dolly's bust: it had quite a few unfortunate names (6)
9 Public meeting in favour of good-for-nothing getting beheaded (5)
14 Characteristic of a joint when puffed? (9)
16 Organs supplying information to foreign nationals (not Poles) (9)
17 The Theatre Royal? (6)
18 Cad, liar — surprisingly not conservative! (7)
19 A big hit: that's Cyclops's reckoning (7)
20 As definitely shown to the novice bondage freak? (5)
22 Party into lap dancing — a natural drug (1-4)
24 Small town news starts with broadcast, Clinton's last (5)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 13.03.98. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 99

Winner: T. ROBERTS

ACROSS: 1/5dn Draw the short straw 5 Scandal 9 Telephoto 10 Lasso 11 No-ball 12 Starkers 14 Embargo 16 (see 25) 17 Nor 18 Picasso 20 Austria 23 Cobblers 24 Turpin 27 Hence 28 Old Bailey 29 Mahatma 30 Pie-eyed.

DOWN: 1 Detente 2 Ad lib 3 Tippler 4 Eros 5 (see 1ac.) 6 Allergy 7 Dismember 8 Look-see 13 Gonorrhoea 15 Back-bench 18 Peckham 19 Solvent 21 Sausage 22 Annoyed 25/16 Polly Toynbee 26 SDLP.

AUTHORS PROTEST AT MURDOCH CENSORSHIP

by Our Literary Staff **Rupert Bare-Faced-Liar**

IN A protest that could spell the end for publishers HarperCollins, some of the world's major authors have decided to stay with the firm.

"I am seriously considering doing absolutely nothing," said Lady Thatcher who was supported in her brave stance by Jeffrey Archer. "This is about free speech," said Archer, "and I'm free to make speeches in favour of Murdoch at any time."

The firm is expected to lose millions of pounds if these two authors remain loyal to HarperCollins, but other writers were equally outraged at the suggestion that they might have to leave. Said John Major, the brother of celebrity best-seller Terry Major-Ball, "This is a serious matter. I have thought about switching to other publishers, but who else would publish my rubbish?"

Some of the world's leading novelists are also threatening to stay put. They include such household names as Fay Donewell, Frank De Looney, Michael Dudds and a number of others desperate to preserve what they call "freedom of money".

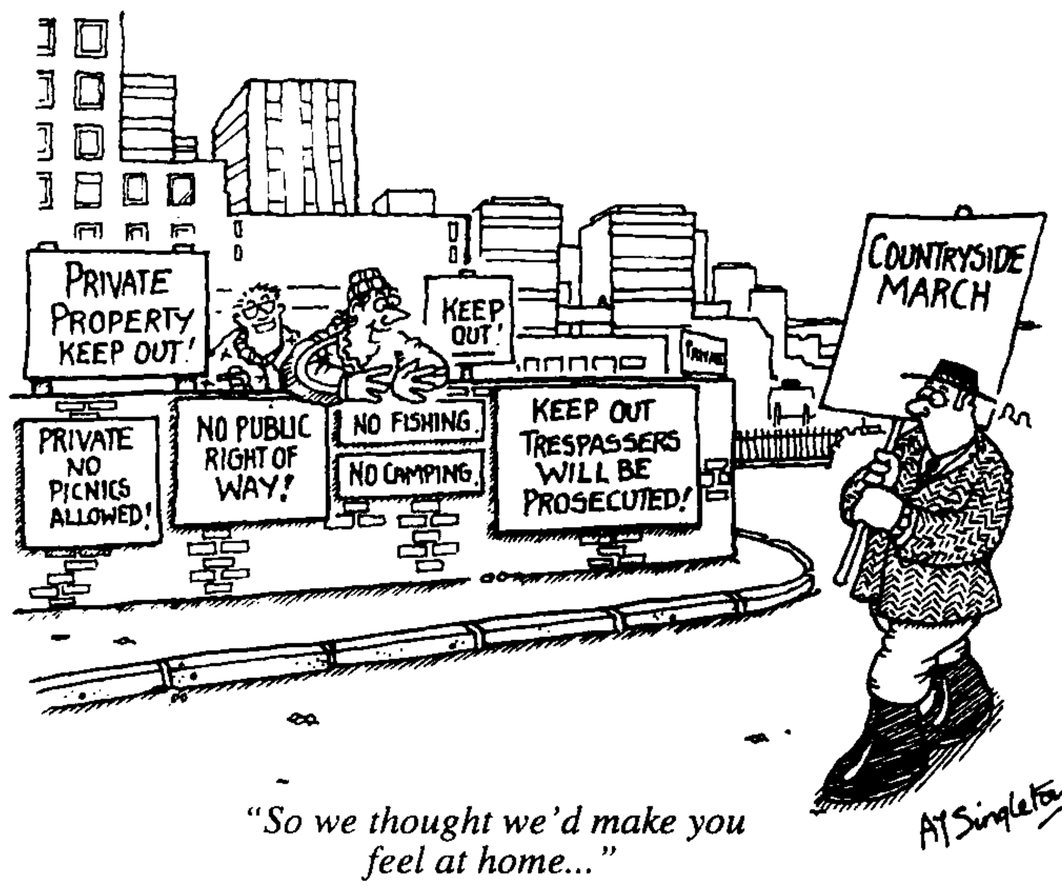
"This is a sad day for British publishing," said Fay Donewell. "I mean, if this sort of thing is going to happen, I don't know what I'll do. And I can't put it stronger than that."

ON OTHER PAGES

St Stuart of Profitt — the world's holiest editor 7

Why Mr Murdoch is quite right and can I keep my job please? *by Matthew Parris* 9

Why Murdoch should be careful about embracing the Chinese *by Andrew Neil* 94



"So we thought we'd make you feel at home..."

My Day Out

by Charles Moore

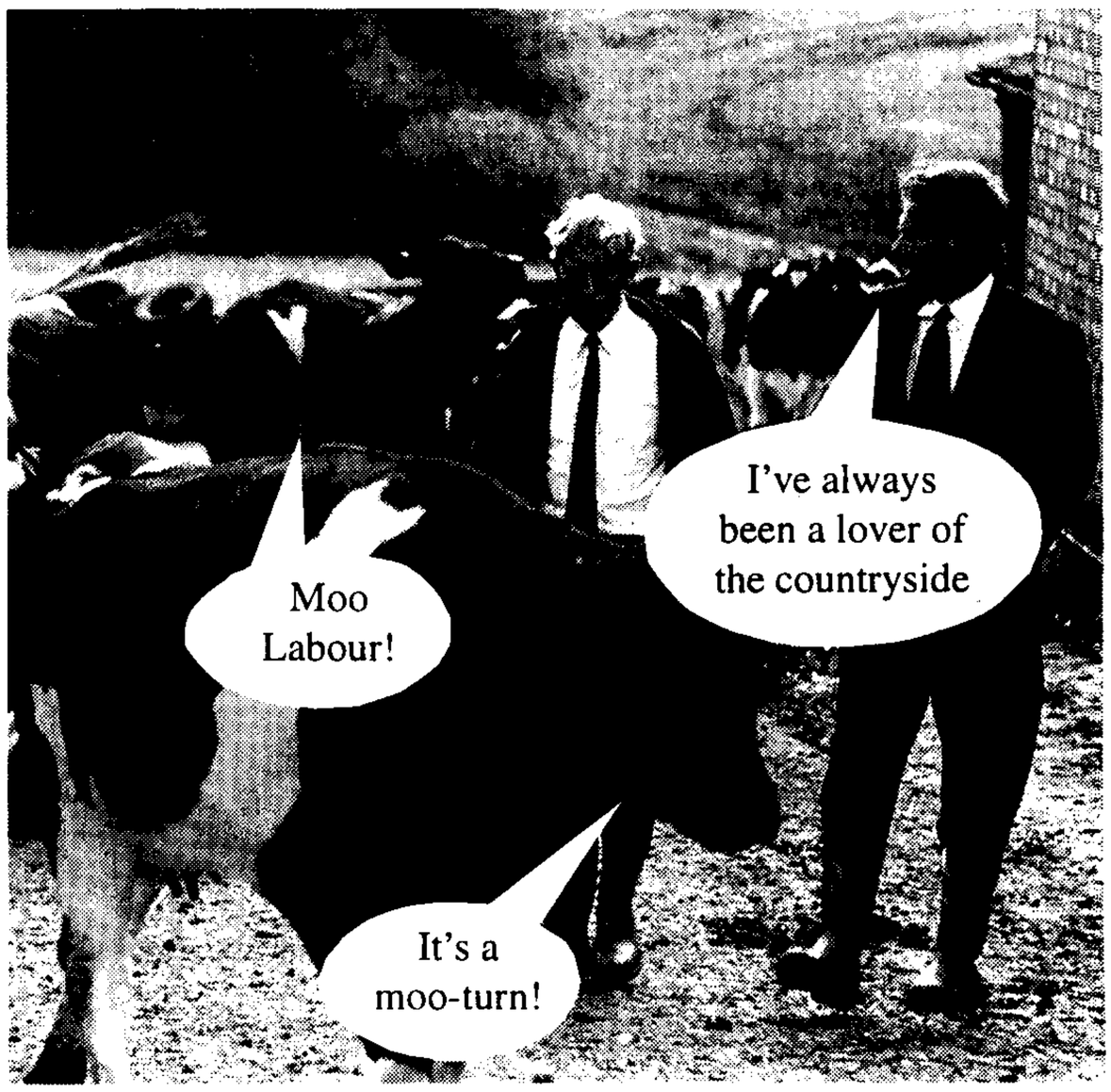
LAST Sunday I got up jolly early, had my breakfast and went up to London to go on a very big march. There were lots and lots of people there, all awfully decent types who dressed properly and did not use bad language — which some people do when they meet me.

It was a lovely sunny day, but it was quite chilly, so I was very glad I was wearing my Barbour and old Etonian socks. We all had a splendid time with people of all classes mingling happily — upper, upper middle and quite a few oiks!

Mr Blair will really have to listen to what we have to say, whatever it is!

© *The Daily Wellygraph*

FOLLOWING THE HERD



MIRROR INTERVIEWS DI'S BODYGUARD

JOBS VACANT

Scum de la Scum

GEC-MARCONI are looking for a senior management executive to co-ordinate and oversee their sales initiative in the Middle East.

The successful candidate should have suitable experience as a shady spiv with a wide knowledge of lying, cheating and sucking up to the towelheads.

An added attraction to the employer would be some experience in running a seedy health hydro and procuring high-class tarts for wealthy clients.

Only Jonathan Aitken need apply.

© *Crime de la Crime*

GEC

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hi there!

As we all know, it is Lent once again (many thanks incidentally to Dr Cunningham for the egg-and-sugar free pancakes on Shrove Tuesday — they were jolly nice and very healthy!).

And the whole point of Lent nowadays is to get away from the old negative idea of just giving things up, and instead to be really positive about life.

This year what I suggest is that what we give up should be:

- cynicism
- complaining about other people
- envying the better off
- criticising the Millennium Tent.

And what we should be taking up should be:

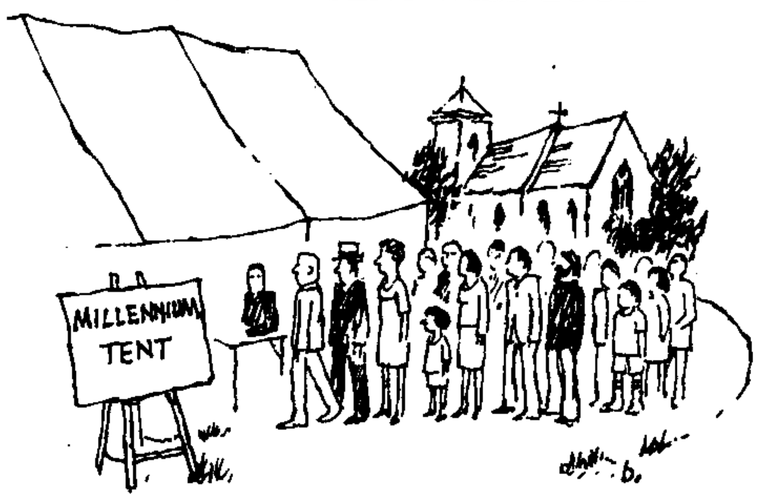
- enthusiasm
- appreciation of other people's efforts
- a proper sense of admiration for those who have used their talents to become wealthy
- praising the Millennium Tent.

As I said last week, at our very successful parish presentation in the Scout Hall, the Millennium Tent is going to be an incredibly important landmark in the history of St Albion's, and will show the world just what this little parish is capable of!

There is absolutely no doubt that everyone will want to see the Tent, and that their visit will be an event that they will look forward to as something that they can look back on for the rest of their lives!

After all, the whole point of the Tent is to look forward, not back.

LOCAL ARTIST'S IMPRESSION OF HOW THE TENT WILL LOOK



(Thanks, Mr Bagnall! TB)

Why on earth should we celebrate 2000 years of history by looking back into the past?

As Our Lord himself said, "Take no thought for yesterday, for what is important is the morrow" *(New Labour Bible, Luke 7.3)*.

That is why our Tent will be about the future. As I explained at the meeting, to silence all those unhelpful people who have been complaining that Mr Mandelson and I have no idea what to put in the Tent, we have lots of ideas, some of which we haven't even thought of yet!

But the main outlines are absolutely clear.

The Tent will be divided into seven main spaces or zones:

1. **The Universe Zone**: this will contain a ping-pong ball suspended on a string, to show how insignificant we are compared with the rest of the cosmos.

2. **Communication Zone:** to symbolise the power of modern global communications, this will be dominated by a 1985 BBC-Acorn computer, kindly donated by Mr Blunkett from St Albion's Primary School.

Visitors will be able to play a number of state-of-the-art video games including Sonic the Hedgehog, Mortal Combat III, Autotheft and Gulfwar.

3. **Dream Zone:** this will contain a king-size bed from Bed Village in the High Street where visitors can go to sleep and experience for themselves the magical world of dreams!

4. **Body Zone:** this is a very exciting feature, thought up by Mr Mandelson, which will consist of a giant 6-foot tall papier maché model of a human figure, made by the Sixth Form art department under the supervision of Mr Smith. We can't wait to see it, Chris!

5. **The Interactive Leisure Zone:** this is where visitors can really make their own contribution by bringing in their holiday videos and playing them to each other.

6. **The Religion Zone:** there may not be much room in this zone, but at least there will be a chair to meditate on.

7. **The Earth And Its Resources Zone:** this will consist of a produce and refreshment stall, run by Mrs Harman and the Working Women's Institute, with home-made cakes from Marks & Spencer's, chutneys from Sainsbury's, etc. Ladies, we need your help here!

What more could anyone possibly want? When I gave my kids a sneak preview of our plans, I'll tell you what they said. "Wow, Dad!" That's what they said. They didn't say "Wouldn't it be better to spend the money on people in hospital?" No, they came right out with it! Enthusiastic, positive, vibrant!

We might even adapt the words of the good book "Unless you accept the tent in the spirit of little children, you will not see the Kingdom of Heaven."

I hope I have made that clear once and for all!

Yours,

Tony

A Message From The Churchwarden

I am sure we are all grateful for the interest the Vicar has shown in our Millennium Tent project. But I would just like to point out that the project was going perfectly well before Tony intervened, thanks to a lot of hard work from people behind the scenes who don't always get the credit I deserve. So, thanks Tony for all your input! But let's not forget the unsung heroes who don't have their picture in the parish newsletter! PM

NOTICES

The footpath through the vicarage garden is ***not*** a right of way. Although Tony has made it clear that he does not mind parishioners using the footpath, he would really appreciate it if people were considerate enough ***not*** to use the path and were to walk round the side of the church instead. Could Mr Meacher and his Ramblers Group please take note?

PM

MEETINGS ++++++++++++

- The title of **Mrs Harman's** talk to the Single Mother's Union has been changed from *"Get A Job You Lazy Slappers!"* to *"The Importance Of Compassion Towards Deprived Groups"*.

- **Mr Blunkett** will be outlining his plans for adult education courses in the gymnasium of St Albion's Comprehensive. Courses include *"You and The Internet"*, *"Presenting Your CV"*, *"Acupuncture For The Over-50s"*, *"Working From Home: The Next Generation Of Employment"*, *"How To Programme Your Video"* and *"Cooking For One"*.

- The Summer Barbecue which **Dr Cunningham** cancelled on health grounds may take place again after much public demand! The original plan to have a Parish Nut Roast has not proved popular and the doctor will be reviewing the situation!

THIS WEEK'S TEXT

"Blessed are the peacemakers — but only so long as they are backed up by a realistic threat of force."

TB

WHAT WERE COLE'S LAST WORDS?

by The Man Who Knew Him Best
MOHAMED AL-FRAUD

IN AN official statement today Mr Mohamed Al-Fraud revealed for the first time what Mr Michael Cole had said to him just before he passed on to another job.

According to the Harrods owner, Mr Cole's very final words were as follows:

"My dear and trusted old friend, please tell the world that you are the most wonderful man I have ever met. I hope with all my heart that the Queen one day rewards you with the passport you so richly deserve."

However, the friends and family of Mr Cole cast doubt on the authenticity of the so-called last words.

"Michael was in no position to say anything," one of them said. "He was speechless with anger and only wanted to die quietly of shame."

ON OTHER PAGES

- *Was Cole pregnant? 7*
- *Was he murdered by Mossad? . . . 8*
- *Was Cole Fayed's love child? . . . 94*

ARCHER'S DEATH SHOCKS NATION

by Our Radio Staff
Dee Dum-Di-Dum

THE public were in mourning yesterday over the announcement that Jeffrey Archer is not to be killed off in the long-running soap opera "The Tories".

A spokesman for the show said: "Jeffrey is one of our most unpopular characters and it makes sense to keep him rather than have him meet an untimely end."

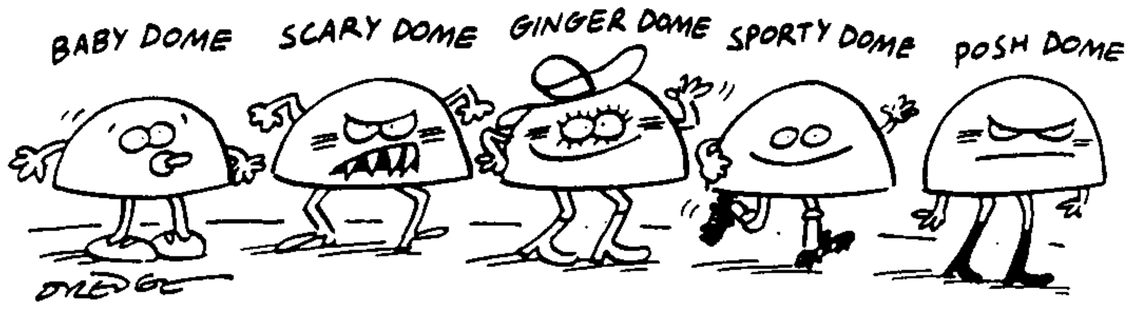
He added: "In fact, we have a new storyline for Jeffrey in which he becomes Lord Mayor of London."

But Archer followers have been quick to condemn the decision.

"Jeffrey Archer may be a somewhat incredible fictional character," said one, "but we hate him. This is just a cynical ploy by the producers of the Tories to try and drum up some interest in their programme.

"The survival of Jeffrey Archer is dumbing down of the worst possible kind."

John Archer was 22.



Sunday Telegraph

How I Went Up In An Aeroplane

by Dominic Lawson (aged 40)

THE most exciting thing I did on my holidays was to go up in an aeroplane. It was a Harrier jump jet like they have in wars on TV! It was great and I wasn't even sick like my friend Max Hastings was!

Before it took off I was very frightened. But the pilot said, "Don't worry, son, this will make a good column for the Sunday Telegraph."

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A Doctor writes

Dempster's Syndrome

AS A DOCTOR I am not often asked about this very rare condition, which is thought to affect only one person in the entire world. What happens is that the patient is stopped by the police while driving his car in what appears to be an inebriated fashion. When asked to give a blood sample, he refuses, saying: "How dare you! Do you realise who I am? I am married to Lady Camilla Pratt-Dumpster, the daughter of the Duke of Leedsh."

When asked again, the patient suddenly remembers that he has a lifelong allergy to needles (or *Hypodermis dumpsteris implausibilis*, as it is now known to the medical profession).

At this point the officer may well say: "I don't like pricks much either."

However, if you are worried about drink driving, you should try claiming to have Dempster's Syndrome — though it must be stressed that this remedy will not prove effective in all courts.

© A. Doctor 1998

The Funeral of Mr Enoch Powell

(cont'd from p. 94)

(representing the Portaloo Apprentice Boys); Mr Simon Heffer (biographer); Mr "Mad Harry" Gobb (Millwall Supporters Association); Mr Matthew D'Ancona (Sunday Telegraph); Mr Reg Stringemup (the Wolverhampton Cab Drivers Benevolent Association); Mr Anthony Wedgwood-Benn (Parliamentary Lunatics Society); Mr Sid Himmler (Referees Association and Neasden Blackshirt Union 1937-39); Mr Charles Moore (Editor, Daily Telegraph); Mr Horace Nabarro (Editor Moustache and Moustachemen 1943-61).

Celeb

LIGGER

I'VE DECIDED TO GO PUBLIC AND COME OUT IN FAVOUR OF THE LEGALISATION OF CANNABIS, JOHNSON.
HAVE YOU, SIR?
YES. THE ARGUMENT THAT IT CAN LEAD TO HARDER DRUGS IS COMPLETE AND UTTER RUBBISH.
I'm NOT SO SURE, SIR.
AND I'D BE CAREFUL IF I WAS YOU. THIS IS THE START OF A VERY SLIPPERY SLOPE.
NONSENSE JOHNSON.
TOLD YOU, SIR.
OH SHIT.
CRASH

Lines Written On The Non-Awarding Of A Knighthood To Scotland's Premier Actor, Mr Sean Connery

by William McGonagall

'TWAS in the year nineteen hundred and ninety eight
That the British nation failed to appreciate
The genius of Scotland's greatest actor
Whose support for the SNP was to prove the decisive factor.

But hold, I am telling my tale too fast.
It behoves us now to go back into the past.
Young Sean Connery began his story
Delivering milk to the folk of Edinburgh both Labour and Tory.

(In those days the young milkman had no political affiliation
He was happy just to deliver silvertop and cans of Carnation.)

But then he was spotted by the great director Cubby Broccoli
Who said "I will make you a star earning lots of lolly.
You will play the part of 007, James Bond."
"Isn't he an upper-class Englishman?" young Sean did respond.

"Never ye mind," said the mogul, "This spy
From now on will be saying 'Och aye'!"
"Ok," said Sean, "I will give it a go."
Which is how he made his debut in *Dr No.*

Many were the films which were soon to ensue –
From Russia With Love, *Thunderball* and *Goldfinger* too.
The series became even more popular than *Lassie*
Each one prefaced with a song by Miss Shirley Bassey.

This incredible success gave Sean a luxurious life-style
And so the patriotic young Scot decided to become a tax exile.
Sean Connery then became the toast of Hollywood
Playing in a number of films which were not very good.

Eventually lots of people suggested that Sean become a knight.
"Arise Sir 007." Yes, that sounded right!
Those who opposed the plan were somewhat fewer.
But they were led by the influential Donald Dewar.

Said he, "Why should we do this man a favour?
He told folk to vote SNP, not Labour."
Of course, canny Donald did not admit this to press.
Rather, he told them it was because Sean likes to beat up anything in a dress.

This was why Scotland's finest son was struck off the list, er...
And thus he was doomed to remain just plain Connery, Mr.

© The Estate of the Late William Rees-McGonagall

EXCLUSIVE!

HALLO! is proud to present these heartwarming pictures of the Duchess of York's recent skiing holiday. They show a different side of the Duchess and offer a unique and charming perspective on this ever popular member of the Royal Family. H

The Duchess enjoys a chipped bone in her right shoulder

The Duchess relaxes in the Radiography Department

The Duchess takes us inside her delightful upper torso

AUTUMN BOOKS

The Female Enoch
by Dr Germaine Drear

In a polemical tirade, Dr Drear savages modern women for being obsessed by sex. She attacks them for ignoring their roles as mothers and homemakers, and lays the blame squarely at the door of sex-obsessed '60s feminists like Germaine Greer.

Sir Charles Moore
by Peter Ackroyd

A stunning new biography of the late 20th Century saint who played a leading role in both politics and the church, until he fell out with his patron King Conrad the Black who ordered his execution in the notorious Tower at Canary Wharf.

The Rambler's Guide To Central London
by Foxhunter Davies

100 walks around Hyde Park for those who like to escape from the country at weekends and march around London.

"Me and Peter have decided to wait until after we're married before we go to Ikea".

Yes! It's Britain's Newest Fanzine

BLAIRZONE

BAND NOOZ

Well, alright! It's happenin'! The Biggest Live Show concept spectacular Mega-Gig since the late great The Floyd presented "The Wall" at Birmingham NEC in 1979 (supported by Lynyrd and the Skynyrds).

Yes — it's Blairzone's "The Dome", live at Greenwich 1999. There's going to be an audience of 12 million fans, all screaming for Tony! Be there or be somewhere else!

Not since Genesis's laser-show-and-inflatable-plants multi-visual fest wowed a generation at the Hammersmith Odeon in 1976 ("Supper's Ready" — post-Foxtrot era) has *any* show, *ever* promised to blow your mind, frazzle your brain and make you think you're at the Science Museum on a wet Sunday afternoon! Yes! It's going to be brilliant! And anyone who says otherwise will hear from the band's lawyers.

Dome Vision

What you'll see:

- **Roger Dean Yes album cover style virtual experience**
- **Sub-Tolkien-Hieronymous Bosch-genre 1970s Poster Display**
- **Electric-Light-Orchestra-type-spaceship-landing 'n' light show (Ref "Out of the Blue" circa 1977)**
- **U-2 Achtung Baby sort of videos and stuff**
- **And more! (Details to be announced.)**

How the Stage Show will look

Dome Trax 2000

- ***Domeward Bound***
- *Wherever I Lay My Tat (That's My Dome)*
- ***Shit Building***

Tone's Thought For The Day

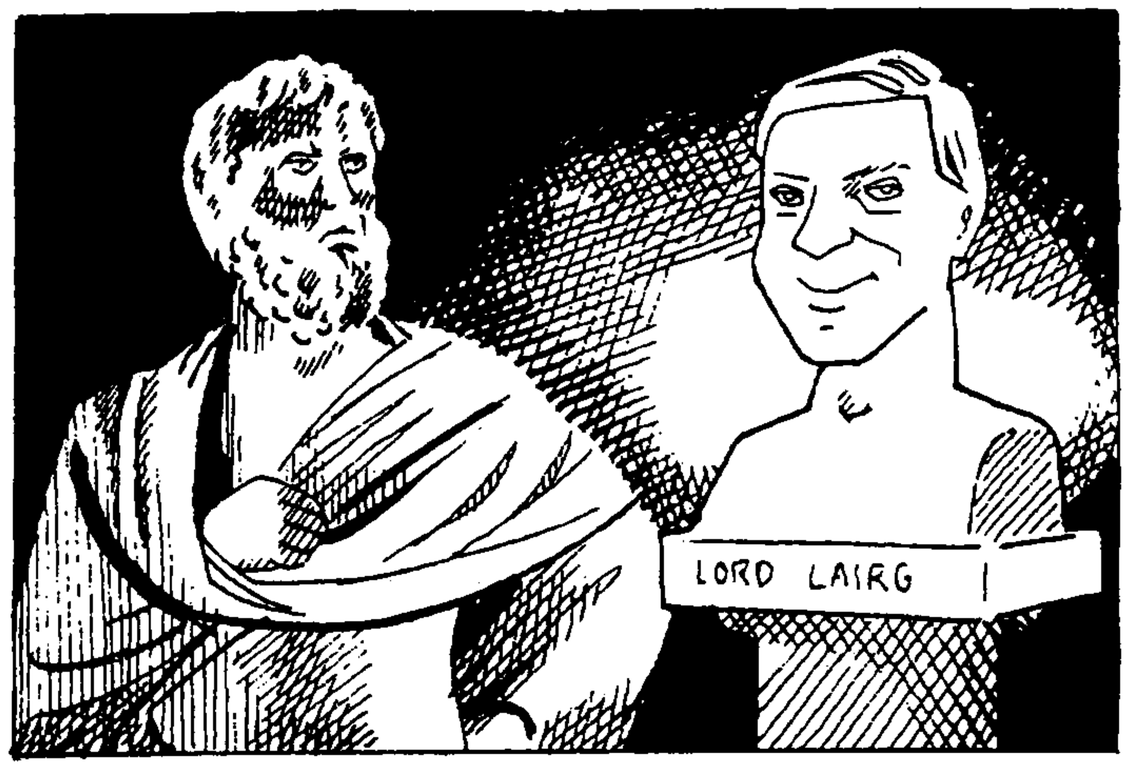
As the late great Kate (of Bush fame) once so memorably put it "Wow!"

Think about it.

Or else.

THE LAIRG COLLECTION

A guide to the world-famous paintings now hanging in the Lord Chancellor's private palace of Westminster.



1. **Aristotle Contemplating A Bust Of Lord Lairg**
(Augustus McWinkie 1827-93)

The great Greek philosopher is seen marvelling at the wisdom of his 20th Century successor.

2. **The Apprenticeship of A Prime Minister**
(Sir "Robbie" Burns-Jones 1846-1903)

Master of the Dundee Pre-Raphaelite school, shows Tony Blair as a young law student, accompanied by his wife to be, eagerly imbibing the wisdom of the great Lord Chancellor who taught him all he knew.

3. **The Abduction of Mrs Donald Dewar**
(School of McPoussin, the Scottish neo-classical revival, active late 18th Cent.)

Epic 36ft x 42ft reworking of the celebrated historical incident when a leading Edinburgh lawyer seduced the beautiful wife of "Wee Donnie" Dewar, who later became leader of the Scottish nation.

The painting shows the illicit couple escaping through an open window, while the cuckolded Dewar appears in a nightshirt and cap, vainly loosing off a blunderbuss at the departing pair.

4. **"Afore Ye Gang"**
(18th Century genre painting, after McHogarth)

Searing allegory on the evils of drink shows bibulous lawyer surrounded by empty bottles of whisky railing impotently against scurrilous scribblers who had dared to criticise him. The caption reads, "I'll close ye down, ye scurvy hacks, I'll bring in a law to break your backs." The humour of the painting lies in the suggestion that the lawyer is about to fall over in a drunken stupor and break his own back. *(That's enough paintings. Ed.)*

HOW YOU CAN SEE THE LAIRG COLLECTION

The Lairg Collection is on show to members of the public at all times of the day or night, except Monday to Sunday, throughout the year. Those wishing to see the pictures must apply, giving six months' notice, to Black Rod, stating their reasons for wishing to view the pictures and including proof of their status as either:

(a) rich Americans;

(b) very important EU dignitaries;

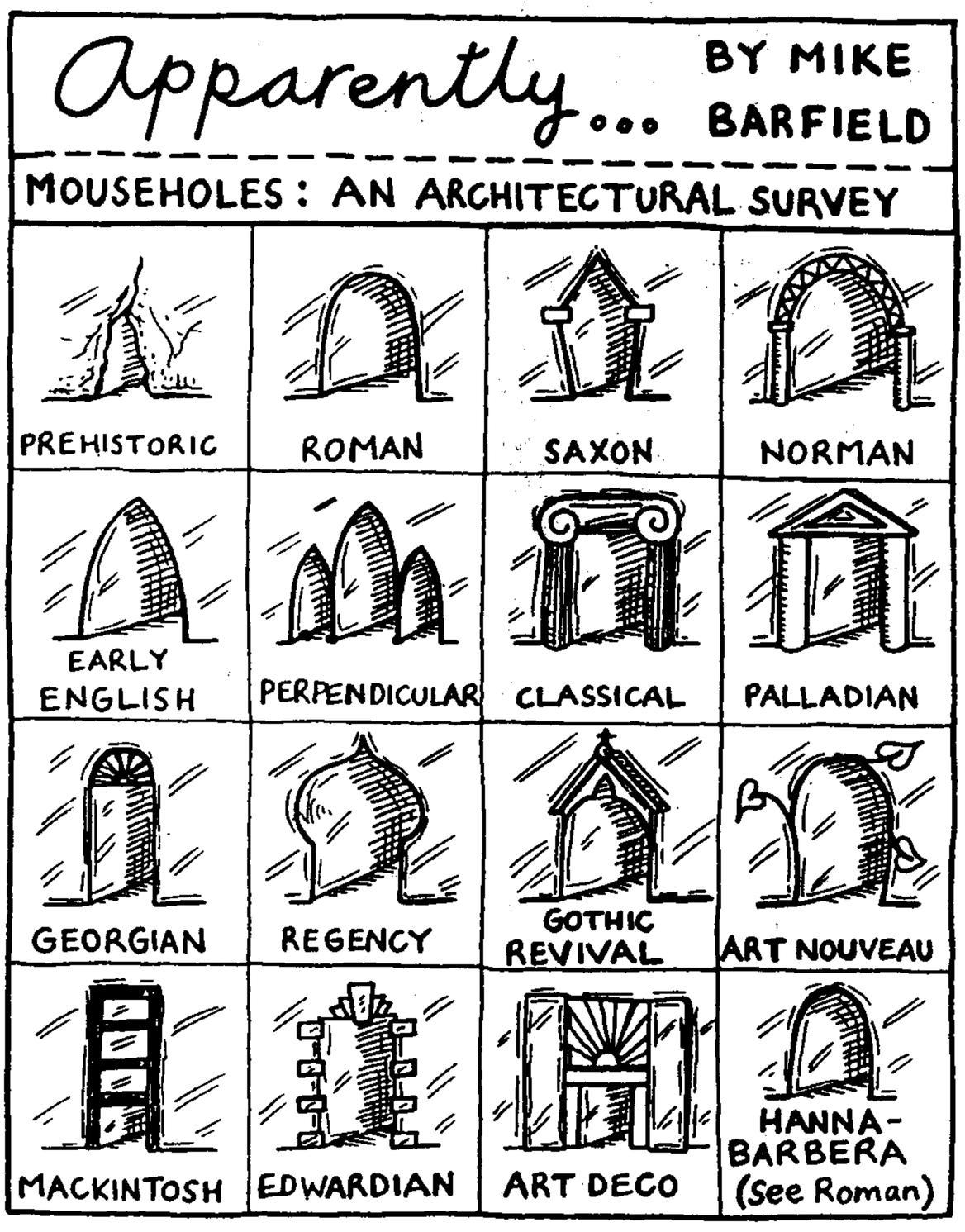
(c) bona fide wives of Lord Lairg, who must also be highly respected art historians;

(d) art historians who are also married *ex-officio* to the Lord Chancellor;

(e) whisky salesmen when accompanied by their wares.

10.45 PROSTITUTE Esther Rantzen presents a new series of interviews with sex workers, beginning with a former airline worker who turned to prostitution after losing her highly paid job. (S)

Cambridge Evening News



MCC TO REMAIN 'BORES ONLY' Shock vote outrages country

by **Lunchtime Score O'Booze**

THE WORLD's oldest bores' club, the MCC, is to keep its doors firmly shut to anyone who is not a bore.

This was the shock result of a poll of the club's 18,000 members, who last night voted unanimously to retain the MCC's coveted all-bore status.

Said the leader of the pro-bore faction, 107-year-old Mr L.B.W. Crasher-Grimblett: "I have nothing personally against people who are not bores — indeed, I am married to one. However, there must be a place where a chap can go, secure in the knowledge that he will be surrounded only by bores like himself."

Sir Timothy Rice is 98 not out.

What You Get For Your £70,000 A Year

- **Red and yellow tie**
- **Red face**
- **Er... that's it.**

Deirdre Spart, Co-Chair of the Hackney Downs Women-Only Cricket Club, comments:

Once again in a totally sickening and predictable act of sport-fascism, the paternalist cricket establishment has instituted their own gender apartheid on the game's oppressed minority, i.e. women. Tony Banks is totally right when he threatens to abolish the MCC and to build much-needed, affordable housing for single parents and same-sex couples on the hated greenfield site that is currently occupied by the Male Chauvinist Conspiracy (i.e. MCC) which is totally *(cont. p. 94)*

Harry Enfield's **Bores** Drawn by **Michael Heath**

"... yah we've been coming to 'bados for the last eight years it's not cheap here we don't see much change from twenny K but y'know I work bloody hard & I play bloody hard I'm not 'fraid to say so one's gotta find time to wind down one's simply gotta oh 'zalutly 'ssential yup za great hotel this yup one of the best on 'bados in fact theee best no question meet a lot of great guys out here there's Tim in Condo 281 who's a major Equity shifter & Tom in Condo 198 who's Futures & Toby in 872 who's just gone to Bankers Trust I mean we're all making serious money so we demand the best I guess yup zalutly & this hotel has goddidall best worder sports best beaches & Barrington the chappie over there makes the best rum punches zalutly yup all the staff are local but it's run by an English guy so everything works & Sophie & the kids love it because they see the same friends every year Sophie actually used to work with Tim's Sophie in Cork Street & was also at school with Tom's Sophie & Toby & Sophie actually live in the next street to us 'mazing coincidence & Max & Mango go to the same school as Tim's kids Max & Melly & in fact so do Toby's kids Zara & Max 'fyou'll 'cuse me 'vgodda go Toby Tim Tom & I are going out on a boat t'fukka shark should be a hoot..."

31. Yo! We're Going to Borebados

Newspaper of the Year
The Daily Hellograph
Britain's biggest-selling quality Friday, March 6, 1998 **45p**

Rich Fat Woman 'Not Very Ill'

Nation In State Of Shock

by Our Man in Mustique Roundtheclock O'Booze

A RICH fat woman on holiday in the luxury Caribbean palm-fringed paradise hideaway island of Mustique yesterday felt "slightly ill" after an agreeable dinner.

The rich fat woman was immediately flown to the nearby luxury, palm-fringed hideaway hospital of Barbados, where her condition was later said to be "fat, rich and not very ill".

Our medical correspondent Dr Stutterfraud writes: We doctors have long known that a

woman of 67 is prone to regular attacks of not feeling as well as you might. If she is wealthy or overweight, the condition may be exacerbated.

Smoking and drinking are likely to make the condition fatal, although in this case there is nothing to suggest that the patient has any cause for alarm.

Other factors such as unrequited love for Captain Townsend, a failed marriage to Lord Snowdon or an unfortunate affair with a much younger man, like Roddy Llewellyn will all help to prolong the article, and can often be very useful as a means of boosting circulation.

Inside

The Tragic Life Of The Rich Fat Woman **8**
The Agony of the Rich Fat Woman's Sister **9**
Bravery of Rich Fat Woman's Mother **10**
Black and white pictures of the 50s **24**

Late News

MPS DEFEND THE RIGHT TO RAMBLE

IN a lengthy session in the House of Commons last night, MPs spoke out about the need to preserve this traditional British occupation. Said Ms Patsy Jacket (Tunbridge Wells, New Lab): "Er... I think rambling is... er... well... er... people who want to access er... the country environment should be... er... and you know there are a lot of fields and open space situations where... er... and fox hunting is really you know unnecessary and... er... inner city townspeople also have rights to fresh air and ... er... global warming which is damaging fish quotas which just goes to show how well Tony Blair is handling the whole thing... er..."
(continued Clause 94)

Those Robinsons In Full

Geoffrey Robinson, multi-millionaire friend of Tony Blair and tax exile who owns the New Statesman. Feisty wife turns up at weddings wearing see-through dress.

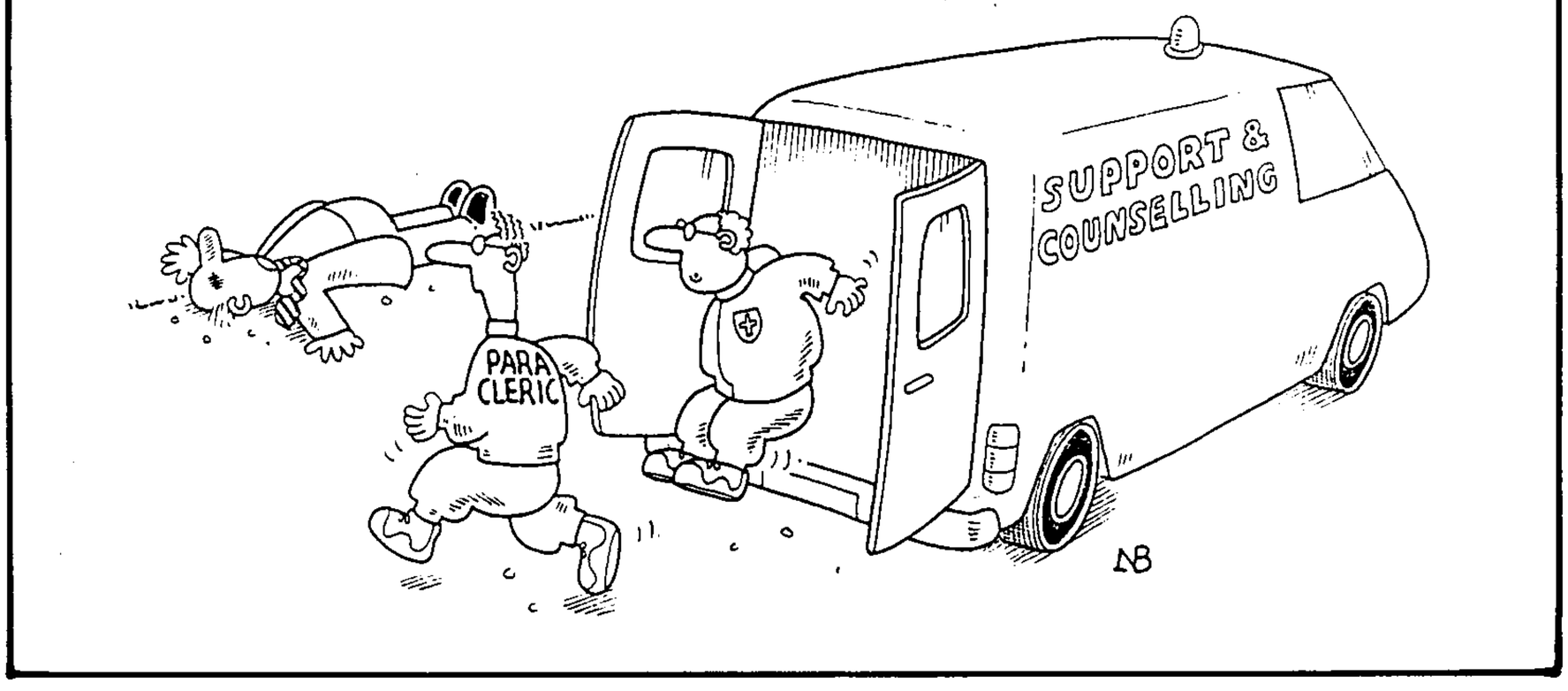
Gerry Robinson, multi-millionaire friend of Tony Blair and head of Arts Council. Not known whether wife feisty or not.

Anne Robinson, millionaire TV presenter and friend of no one. Described as "the feist lady of Fleet Street".

Geoffrey Robertson, multi-millionaire friend of Tony Blair and lawyer, who writes in the New Statesman. Feisty wife turns up at literary parties wearing mini-skirt.

George Robertson, non-millionaire friend of Tony Blair and Defence Secretary. Status of wife feisty-wise unsure.

Robert Robinson-Crusoe, friend of Man Feisty who *(That's enough Robinsons. Ed.)*



DIARY

ZOE BALL AND
KEVIN GREENING

Zoe: FAN-tastairk!

Kevin: Wow!

Zoe: We're talking about last night's TV, didja see it? FAN-tastairk!

Kevin: Todally brillyunt! Wow!

Zoe: Wow indeedy! So, let's tell everyone what was on, Kevin! Let's not keep 'em guessing one second longer!

Kevin: Atcherly, Zoe — I can't REMEMBER what was on, well, not exackly!

Zoe: Nor can I!

Both: HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!

Zoe: Musta bin good!

Kevin: or BAD!

Both: HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!

Zoe: More on that after this, from All Saints.

❋

Zoe: Swat were we like talking 'bout, Kevin?

Kevin: You got me there, Zoe! I wasn't listening to myself!

Zoe: And I wasn't talking to myself!

Both: HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!

Zoe: Histry question, Kevin, right?

Kevin: Right, great, I'm good at maps and hill-type things.

Zoe: That's jography.

Kevin: Same difference. Fire away, Zoe.

Zoe: Okay. Histree. What was the Spice Girls' first number one?

Kevin: Lost me there, Zoe. Musta bin literally SENTRIES ago. Lost in the mists of wodever, right?

Zoe: Right. But maybe someone brainy out there knows. If so, give us a bell on 0500 110 1500 — and you could win yourself a FANtastairk chance to stand in Oxford Street and wave at the Spice Girls as they whizz past in their chauffeur-driven limousine on their way to Wembley next autumn. And I can't promise anything, but they may even look IN YOUR DIRECTION!

Kevin: Wow! Just imagine! And we'll have lots more interesting facts for you, after this, from Drivel.

❋

Kevin: Interesting fact, Zoe. Did you know that the world is not, like, square or rectangular or anything. It's more, like, well not triangular so much as, erm, like, wozaword?

Zoe: Narrow?

Kevin: Nope. Erm…

Zoe: Not square, not rectangular, not triangular, not narrow! Doesn't leave much, does it, Kevin! Hahahahahaha!

Kevin: Hahahahahaha! No, but seriously, it's the one which is, like, square, but without all those edges?

Zoe: Round?

Kevin: Thassit!

Zoe: You're kiddin'! Truly, Kevin?

Kevin: Truly.

Zoe: FAN-tastairk! Lots more coming up after this, from Human Waste.

❋

Kevin: We got a caller on the line who thinks she knows the Spice Girls' first number one. Melanie from Ipswich. Morning Mel! Hey! Mel! Just like two of the Spice Girls. Like is that like a coincidence, or what? Spoo-KEEE!

Zoe: Hahahahahaha! You there, Mel from Ipswich?

Melanie from Ipswich: Yeah, Zoe.

Zoe: So what's the answer?

Melanie from Ipswich: Is it six?

Zoe: We were after the name of the Spice Girls' first number one smash hit, Mel? Here's a clue… Spice Up Your…

Melanie from Ipswich: Seven, then.

Kevin: Gonna have to leave you there, Mel. Good try, very close. It was Spice Up Your Life. Must've bin number one literally YEARS ago, like, when Churchill was in power and there was no such things as cars, just horses and dogs or wodever, and, like Kylie was still in Neighbours.

Both *(sing)*: Neighbours! Everybody needs good neighbours! Hahahahahaha!

Kevin: On a more seeryerz note, I bin thinking, Zoe. When you think about it, radio's pretty much a non-visual meejum, right?

Zoe: Uh?

Kevin: Like, you can't see it.

Zoe: Yeah you can, or how could you switch it on?

Kevin: But it doesn't have pictures you can watch, right, or at least not many?

Zoe: That's true. Never thought of that before. Wow!

Kevin: So what I was thinking was, like, wouldn't it be like amazing if some great genius or wodever invented something like a radio — only it had pictures as well!

Zoe: Wow! FAN-tastairk! You mean like a TV-type kinda thing?

(Awkward Pause)

Kevin: Lots more on that after this, from Dead Boring.

❋

Kevin: News update. Liam Gallagher is suffering from a slight sniffle, but sources close to the top Oasis singer say he should be fine by tomorrow. Top Hollywood star Kate Winslet says she won't be putting on any more weight if she can possibly help it. Shane from top group Boyzone is set to marry Esther from top girl group Eternal. And finally it's don't-get-mad-get-even time for top Dictator Saddam Hussein who is today expected to order the nuclear bombing of all Europe. All these stories — and why top model Elle The Body Macpherson could be set to star in the new Robin Williams movie — on Newsbeat, coming up in half an hour.

Zoe: Incidentally, anyone here remember President Bush?

Kevin: Great name! What was he in? E.R.?

Zoe: Says here he was President of America. Must've been before whasisname, Clint-thingy.

Kevin: Clint Eastwood! Brillyunt! I reckon he was the best President they ever had. Didja see him in *Titanic,* one helluva great movie?

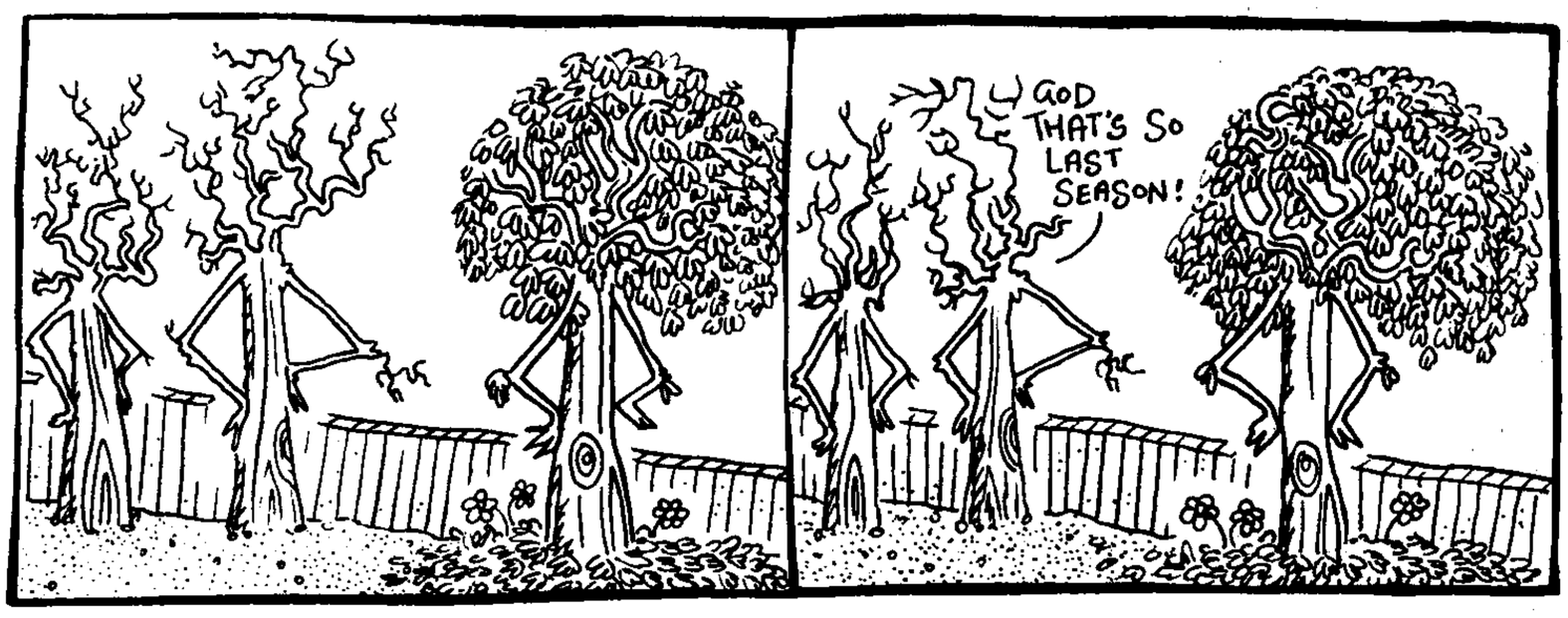
Zoe: Robert de Niro? Was he in Titanic?

Kevin: Maybe not, but let's face it, if he had bin, it would never of sunk — and that's a fact!

Zoe: FAN-tastairk!

SUPERMODELS

KERBER



Lord and Lady Steel at Aikwood Tower which cost £250,000 to restore

Literary Review

Garrison under siege

Wobegon Boy
Garrison Keillor
(Faber, £16.99)

LAKE WOBEGON, for those unacquainted with the wonderful world of Garrison Keillor, lies smack in the middle of Minnesota. Its inhabitants are a fantastically dour breed of Norwegian-descended Lutherans, who wear their suspicion of emotional luxuriance like an identity badge, and whose dislike of the ostentatious is in itself a form of ostentation. It's the sort of town where the beauty queens purposely dress down and yearn to migrate somewhere where they can style their hair properly and not have to worry about the crowd muttering "Who does she think she is?"

At first glance our hero John Tollefson looks to have evaded these exacting shackles. A big tall guy in his early forties, he manages a college radio station in upstate New York, has made what looks like a prudent stake in a farm restaurant, and gets to date a hottish academic babe named Alida who is writing a book about a celebrated 19th century Norwegian homeopath who knew Lincoln.

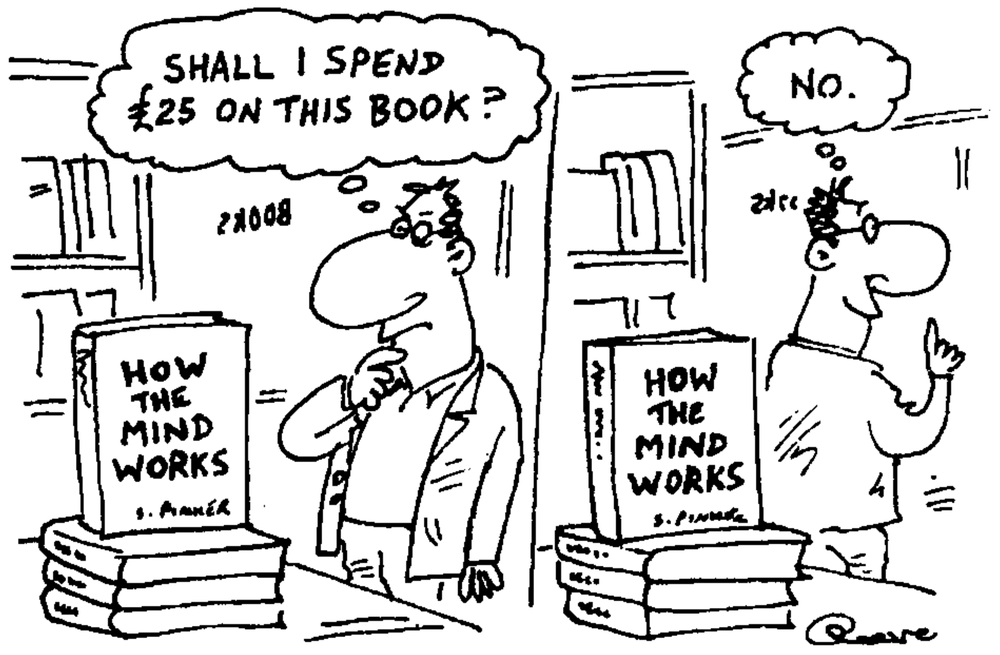
What could go wrong? Well, everything, natch. Tollefson's initial worry is that he has a lifestyle rather than a life ("I need passion," he mentally addresses Alida. "Blood, magnificence. You are the only magnificence I know. Marry me." Alas, she's happy with things as they stand). Pretty soon, though, the restaurant is in deep trouble and the college dean (who inclines to talk radio for ethnic minorities) is rooting for his removal. Alida, meantime, is in Denmark doing research. Finally news arrives from Wobegon that his father is dead.

No prizes for guessing the next swerve in the plot. Sure enough, Tollefson whizzes back to childhoodsville to find that bygone family life — those weird Minnesota cronies, the legends of great-grandfather who came over from Norway in the 1890s — has suddenly foregrounded itself, a bare mass of solidity in a shifting modern world.

All of which, on one creative level, is just fine. It's certainly nice to see an American novel that is about ordinary people living ordinary lives rather than subway marauders and crack babblers, even if the theme — small-town past looming up in front of big-city present — is *the* cliché in modern American literature.

What brings *Wobegon Boy* down, though, and leaves it lying winded on the sidewalk, is the completely unreflecting nature of its backwoods conservatism. You don't believe me? Tollefson's musings come crammed with the stiffest cultural imperatives: anti-interpretation, anti-cleverness, anti-avant-garde. Listen to Arthur Rubinstein playing Chopin and "you are no longer a liberal or a conservative or even an American, but simply a breathing sensate human being with a soul".

Political correctness of the brand espoused by the crabby dean is just a plot to let people fill the airwaves with documentaries about premature menopause. Alida is immediately attractive because she is a *narrative* historian, and narrative history is "the best filter of nonsense and political fluff". Whoah! You go on in there and give those highbrows hell, Garry! Somehow there is something uniquely depressing in the spectacle of a character publicly thanking God that he isn't brainy, and gleefully slamming the door on any kind of intellectual response that goes beyond the "sensate human being" line.



The rest of the novel takes in rambling recapitulations of old Wobegoners, and some rueful one-liners. Thus, asked to speak at a friend's memorial service, Tollefson tries to decline on the grounds that he didn't know the man well enough. "Neither did I," his widow replies, "but what does it matter now?"

What indeed? But you can't escape your past, buster, and the Wobegon clarion rings out. Having lost his job and seen his investment go pear-shaped, Tollefson heads off with Alida — her book is a failure, by the way — to New York, marriage and dignified semi-retirement. In the end *Wobegon Boy* declares itself as an exercise in knowing your limitations and not making a fuss — a splendid message, irretrievably compromised by the self-imposed limitations of the book itself. Too many bars of middlebrow candy, Garrison baby, and you can suddenly see the attractions of a plateful of plovers' eggs.

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ HARPERCOLLINS' axing of Chris Patten's book *East and West*, thanks to the Dirty Digger's "extreme displeasure", is a PR disaster for the company and should finally force the long expected departure of Eddie "McBastard" Bell.

The pathetic attempt to suggest that Patten's book was boring worked only with "Black Dog" -- henceforth to be known as "Docile Puppy" -- in the *Mail on Sunday*. It was demolished when the *Daily Telegraph* published a memo from McBastard referring to "KRM's" (Keith Rupert Murdoch's) outlining of "the negative aspect of publication". This comment will no doubt be referred to many times during the legal action being taken by Biddle & Co for Patten, who is suing HarperCollins for breach of contract.

Patten's editor Stuart "Professor" Proffitt, who was suspended and then resigned because of demands that he drop the former Hong Kong governor's book, has hitherto been known as a shifty political manoeuvrer and archetypal corporate man. Ironically his line on Murdoch has previously been that of uncritical admiration. But there is no denying he has come out of the affair as a man of integrity as a result of his refusal to do McBastard's bidding.

HarperCollins paid £125,000 for Patten's book. This is an advance McBastard must have approved. Failure to predict KRM's displeasure was a trifle careless.

Ever since the hasty rise of the conglomerates, with megalomaniac monsters owning or controlling them, it has only been a matter of time until something like the Patten-Proffitt debacle would happen. The real demise of Collins as a great publishing house happened when Murdoch acquired it and made the British imprint subservient to New York's once distinguished house, Harper & Row, which he had also acquired.

HarpicCollins is now in some trouble – especially if Jung Chang, author of the huge seller *Wild Swans*, decides it is a touch embarrassing to write about Chinese repression for a company owned by the regime's chief western apologist. Proffitt meanwhile is close to being sanctified by the non-Murdoch press who have chosen to forget his exploits trying to rewrite Jeffrey Archer's latest rubbish (see *Eyes passim*) and the other less than glorious incidents in his past. Still, the "Professor" is a relentless if humourless proponent of serious editing and publishing who has at the eleventh hour done the right thing and taken a stand against Murdoch.

OUP, who will soon appoint a new chief executive and publisher, has been trying to persuade the Professor to accept the job. It's ironic that, contrary to the sentimental quotes from his loyal authors last week, he was not much loved by colleagues and there is much rejoicing among erstwhile underlings that the William Hague lookalike has left. He is likely to be replaced by another humiliated and bruised publisher, Susan Watt, the recently departed publishing director of Michael Joseph.

Bookworm

SNIPCOCK & TWEED
IT GIVES A FASCINATING INSIGHT INTO THE WORKINGS OF A TYRANNICAL RÉGIME...
CHRIS PATTEN MEMOIRS
EAST AND WEST
HARPER COLLINS
JUNG CHANG NEXT TO GO?
HALF AN HOUR AFTER AXING ONE CHINESE BOOK YOU FEEL LIKE ANOTHER

footnotes

RATTEE AND MOLE

MR JUSTICE RATTEE

AT 2pm on 24 February there were 10 lawyers and three journalists in Court 18 of the High Court. Five minutes later, the journalists were cleared out. Mr Anthony Bompas QC, for the Department of Trade and Industry, told Mr Justice Rattee he was greatly perturbed by articles in the Press about the case, which involved "very sensitive issues".

The judge promptly ordered the hacks out. The following day, when there were no journalists in court, Mr Bompas generously asked the judge to waive the "in camera" rule he had imposed the previous day and to allow the journalists who weren't there to attend.

What was going on? The case was a pre-trial review of the attempt by the DTI to disqualify former directors of the arms company Astra. The "very sensitive issues" concerned the involvement of British intelligence agents in secretly setting up a $5bn dollar arms deal between Britain and Malaysia in the 1980s. One of the agents, very well known to *Eye* readers, was Stephan Adolphus Kock, who was then a director of Astra and a defence consultant to the Midland Bank. In his defence against disqualification, former Astra chairman Gerald James argues that Kock was an MI6 agent, whose loyalty to the intelligence services and to their multi-billion arms deal in Malaysia was greater than his loyalty to Astra. The other agent was Richard Unwin, a former director of a pyro-technics firm and an Astra consultant. (*Eyes passim*, especially No. 841, 11 March 1994.)

GERALD JAMES

In his written evidence to the 1994 House of Commons foreign affairs select committee on the Pergau Dam scandal, Mr James said: "It was clear at all times that the [Malaysian] project was in the hands of Kock and Unwin as they were able to have [John] Laings appointed as the prime contractor... In 1989, my wife and I were invited to a week-end beano at Martin Laing's country house in Hertfordshire... The guest list included Malaysian high commission personnel including the high commissioner and deputy commissioner. It appeared that the intelligence connection of Kock and Unwin put them in the driving seat on the deal and there is no doubt that Kock was reporting directly to the prime minister, as he talked a lot about his meetings with and ability to contact Mrs Thatcher at any time."

The allegation that British intelligence was closely involved in the Pergau dam aid-for-arms scandal was completely ignored by the select committee, who did not call James, Kock or Unwin to give evidence at their hearings. As so often, James was dismissed as a bit of a nutter who is obsessed with ludicrous conspiracy theories.

KOCK OF THE NORTH – AND MI6

But wait. The *Eye* can reveal that on 28 April 1987 Stephan Kock wrote on Midland Bank notepaper to the secretary of state for defence, George Younger, as follows: "We have for some months now been in close discussions with the Malaysian Ministry of Defence regarding a major project as yet classified as secret... Negotiations have mainly been conducted by myself and Martin Laing, chairman of Laing Construction plc. In view of the official visit by the Malaysian premier and his defence chiefs in June we would ask for a meeting as soon as convenient... I have personally briefed the Director SAS and he is as yet the only other person informed on the project."

This needs to be compared with a letter from George (by then Lord) Younger in April 1996 to a journalist who asked about Kock's connections with the Malaysian arms deal. "I have," wrote Younger, "no recollection at all of Mr Kock being involved in the Malaysian defence package, so, if he was involved, it must not have been at my level."

CORRECTION

■ ON 9 January, a story appeared on these pages about a case at Aldershot magistrates court in which the prosecution offered no evidence against Alan Bone, a police driving instructor in Surrey. Mr Bone, who had been charged with speeding at 124 mph on the M3, was awarded costs.

The piece named two "arresting officers" who were not in court to give evidence — PS Nick Carter and PC Kevin Gillespie. These names had appeared in the *Aldershot News*, whose reporter says they were read out in court.

PC Kevin Gillespie tells us through his lawyers that he was not the arresting officer in this case and had nothing to do with it. Hampshire police confirm that the second arresting officer was another constable. The *Eye* is glad to correct the mistake and to apologise to PC Gillespie for it.

GEC: Grossly Expensive Craft

■ WORK starts any day now on a new warship for the Sultan of Brunei, the richest man in the world. A meticulous 40-page document circulated to selected London journalists (including the *Eye*) denounces the ship as an absurd white elephant, equipped with engines and missile systems which have no relevance to the ship's stated role.

The document reveals, accurately, that in 1987 the Southampton-based firm Vosper Thorneycroft was contracted to build three patrol vessels for the Brunei armed forces. The contract was "frozen", the document alleges, "as the result of an unfair and libellous smear campaign by Swan Hunter". The Swan Hunter smearers then went to work for GEC and its Glasgow shipbuilding subsidiary, Yarrow. Somehow the Vosper Thorneycroft contract vanished, and in its place emerged a new agreement for a much bigger and more expensive ship to be built for Brunei —this time by GEC/Yarrow. The document complains that the ship's Ruston engines have "never before been selected for a first-rate warship" and that most of its GEC-supplied weapons system, including a Sea Wolf missile, is absurd. The ship is expected to cost some £200m more than the agreed £545m. The only reason for it, the document argues, is further to sweeten the close relationship between the British government, GEC and the Sultan, to whom £700m is chicken feed.

Why has so detailed a document with so much confidential information been so widely circulated? The document pretends to be worried about corruption between GEC and the late Tory government, but provides no proof. The real reason for it is that GEC's competitors in the naval defence industry are terrified and frustrated by the growing GEC monopoly, and are resorting to desperate measures, including leaking sensitive information, to embarrass it.

WHIPS CROSS: 2

■ MORE about the curious convergence of Labour whips around the party's inquiry into alleged corruption in Doncaster (*Eye* 939). Kevan Jones, a member of the inquiry team, is Labour's chief whip on Newcastle council, and a close friend of Nick Brown, MP for Newcastle East, Labour's chief whip at Westminster. Both whips support a controversial property development in Brown's constituency.

The developer is Freddie Shepherd, a director of Newcastle Utd FC, where a fellow director is Douglas Hall. Hall chaired a company which got planning permission from Doncaster Council for a highly controversial multi-million green belt development at Rossington, South Yorkshire. The development was stopped by a government inspector.

Last year, several Doncaster councillors were suspended from all Labour Party office. Shortly before Christmas, they were joined by the former leader of Doncaster Council, Gordon Gallimore. Gallimore was chairman of the Doncaster North constituency Labour Party when Councillor Kevin Hughes, the local party secretary, was nominated for the parliamentary seat in 1992. Kevin Hughes MP now serves Nick Brown MP in the Commons as an assistant Labour whip.

KEVIN HUGHES

WHY OH WYETH?

THE Acne Support Group was founded in June 1992 as a charity to "provide support and advice and to promote better treatment" for the thousands of people who suffer from the debilitating and painful skin disease.

In the first issue of its magazine *Face Forward*, secretary Alison Dudley wrote that she was sceptical about the use of antibiotics to treat acne. Oxytetracycline, for instance, had been "useless" to her.

For four years the magazine maintained a balanced and sceptical approach to drug treatment. In January 1996, the *British Medical Journal* revealed serious possible side effects of minocycline (Minocin), the antibiotic most commonly prescribed for acne.

The side effects, which the article admitted were rare, included hepatitis and *lupus erythematosus-like* syndrome, whose symptoms are similar to extreme and crippling arthritis. The *BMJ* revelations led to a front page in the *Daily Mail* and an article in the *Times* which reported that two young people on Minocin had died from its side effects.

The next issue of the Acne Support Group's *Face Forward* led its front page with the headline: "ASG REBUTS DRUG SCARE". Dr Tony Chu, a consultant dermatalogist at Hammersmith Hospital, the founder and chairman of the group, said he was "horrified by the sensational way the press had dealt with the entire issue". The unpleasant side effects of Minocin were, he said, "extremely rare". A huge double-page feature entitled: "YOUR PAIN, THE MEDIA'S GAIN" lambasted the media. On the back page, a small news item headed "CORPORATE CHUMS" extended "our thanks to Sandoz, to Yamanouchi Pharmar and to Wyeth Laboratories who have recently joined our corporate membership scheme. This brings the number of corporate members to a round dozen. It's inspiring to have you on board".

There was no reference to the fact that Wyeth Laboratories, whose British headquarters are in Maidenhead, make Minocin. The ASG accounts for that year showed that Wyeth's contribution (£6000) was by far the biggest from any company or individual donor. Wyeth has continued since to donate generously to the ASG, and to sponsor issues of *Face Forward*.

In a long interview with the *Eye* Dr Chu vehemently denied any connection between the ASG's views on Minocin and the Wyeth money. The reason Wyeth started to contribute to the ASG in 1996, he said, was that they had just taken over the Minocin manufacturers Lederle, who had always refused to contribute. Wyeth Laboratories told the *Eye* that they had taken over Lederle in November 1994. The first donation from Wyeth was in the year of the "press scare" — 1996.

Dr Chu said that Minocin provided "incredibly good treatment to millions of people all over the world" who had grown in confidence as their acne had cleared up. He insisted that he and the ASG were "entirely independent". He and the other leading British dermatologist dealing with acne had never seen a single case of the side effects exposed by the *BMJ* article. He said that doctors have all the information they need about these side effects and should pass them on to their patients.

This confidence is not shared by a young *Eye* correspondent who was struck down with crippling arthritis for 18 months without either her doctor or her specialist even hinting that the drug might be to blame. She was alerted to the danger only when she read about it in the newspapers, and

DR TONY CHU

quickly recovered when she dropped Minocin. On a Channel 4 *Health Alert* programme last year a South Wales doctor, whose young patients had been crippled by Minocin for two years, said he would never prescribe the drug again. A firm of solicitors in Swansea, Smith Llewelyn, is representing more than 150 people who are suing Wyeth Laboratories over the side effects of Minocin.

The *Eye* asked Dr Chu how he would feel if donations to his charity did not come from the drug companies who profit from treating his members. "I'd absolutely love it," he said. "I think most charities would like to be genuinely independent. But where do we get the funds from? If you can point out a way we can provide revenue — if *Private Eye* would like to give me £500,000 — I'd do without the company money. But where do you get the sponsorship if you don't get it from industry?"

Dr Chu expanded at some length on the large amount of unpaid time he devotes to the Acne Support Group and said he was "incredibly pissed off when people take us for granted".

High Principals

MANAGERS, WE GOT 'EM

■ **GWENT Tertiary College has a proud record of successfully teaching students over 16 from all over South Wales. In the bad old days when it was run by the local council, its A-level pass rate was over 90 per cent and in 1992 it actually made a profit. Obviously, desperate measures were called for. The college was "incorporated" (privatised) in 1993.**

Two years later, from Harlow, Essex, came a new principal, Sue Parker, highly trained in up-to-date management methods. Together with Stuart Smith, chairman of the governors, a personnel director of a local car components firm, she set about clearing out the fuddy-duddy notions of the past. The heads of the college centres were hauled away from their students into a brand new management centre. One hundred and eighteen new managers were created. At once, the college slumped into enormous debt. The projected loss for the year ending July this year is £6.7m.

More desperate measures were called for. The college called up an educational consultant, Mr Cyril Lewis, and paid him £650 a day to find out what had gone wrong. Mr Lewis was paid £77,000 of taxpayers' money. His report, like another very expensive one from Ernst & Young, was kept secret for fear of libel. His main remedy was sackings. About 50 people were sacked at once. Eighty-eight sackings of support staff have just been announced, with more to come. Sue Parker left, and the college will soon have a new principal, David Mason, from Amersham and Wycombe College, which lost a historic industrial tribunal case over the rights of part-time lecturers. There is also a new consultant on personnel, Malcolm Ballin, who gets £400 a day. The new chairman of governors is retired local brewer Chris Hughes, and a new member of his board is Sean Walters, managing director of the *South Wales Argus*, which in recent months has been sharply critical of the college.

When these matters were raised in the Commons by local MPs Llew Smith and Don Touhig, the Welsh Office Minister Peter Hain agreed that "no one would defend" the management structure at the college, but said he could not legally sack the governors (or do anything else, for that matter).

THE WAR OF JENKINS SMEAR

■ **THE Vice-Chancellor of Anglia Polytechnic University, Mr Michael Malone-Lee, has been sent a copy of an astonishing smear against several members of his staff. The smear has been sent to the *Times Higher Education Supplement* and to the *Eye* in response to recent revelations about the curious behaviour of Professor Huw Jenkins, head of the university's business school and his lecturer son Jonathan.**

In two closely-written and weirdly-illustrated sheets, the document accuses almost every member of staff who has ever had a critical word for the Jenkins family as malingering, greedy or deceitful. Two members of staff are alleged (wrongly) to be having an affair and another is described (wrongly) as gay. Indeed, every single specific allegation is false.

Mr Malone-Lee is a former senior official in the Lord Chancellor's department, and will therefore know where to find the men in white coats who are obviously and urgently required to sort out this mess.

Son of Huw: JONATHAN JENKINS

STAGECOACH HELD UP

■ **NO GOVERNMENT is more fanatical about private enterprise than that of New Zealand.**

For new private companies setting up there, almost anything goes. But a line has to be drawn somewhere and one has just been drawn over the British bus and train giant Stagecoach.

The New Zealand Commerce Commission has refused to allow Stagecoach to buy Auckland's £30m Yellow Bus company. Stagecoach's New Zealand subsidiary already runs 100 buses in Auckland, and the Commission said it was "not satisfied that Stagecoach would not acquire or strengthen a dominant position in the market for scheduled passenger services in Greater Auckland".

Could someone in New Zealand have been reading the Eye's many accounts of the methods by which Stagecoach gained control of the bus industry in so many areas in Britain?

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183

In the City

THE Alternative Investment Market (AIM) continues to live down to the lowest expectations of those whose see the AIM (*sic*) as: never give a sucker an even break.

A new record for what might charitably be termed AIM incompetence (but could turn out to be something much worse) has just been established by the extremely short and unhappy listed life of XL Communications Group.

Floated initially in July 1996 as Life Numbers and offering personal telephone numbers, the company did not flourish. Last November, after a five-month courtship, it agreed a "reverse" takeover by magazine publishers XL run by two former alumni of the Cap'n Bob School of Management. Dealings resumed in the shares on 22 December. Five weeks later on 28 January dealings in XL were suspended. Two weeks later the combined company collapsed. The full extent of the damage has yet to be revealed.

The advisers in charge of this good thing were brokers Charles Stanley. They should have a lot of questions to answer from the Stock Exchange, whose efforts to police AIM have once again been shown to be deeply flawed.

XL had two big strikes against it going in, which made it undoubtedly high risk. But there is something highly suspicious about a company whose lifespan is as brief as the shelf life of its little known magazines. Strike one was that both Life Numbers and XL were making big losses. Indeed, Life Numbers was about to expire until XL came along. Death was delayed, not denied, for a few weeks. Perhaps not so surprising, as the XL losses were almost double those of the company it was taking over! Life lost £721,000 in the year to last May, while XL in its first year's trading to the same date managed to lose £1,370,000.

It is a unique business concept to assume that putting two big loss makers together will make a profitable company. But that was what XL was promising. Not only that, but somehow XL and its losses were said to be worth Life shares valued at £5.6m — shares that less than three months later are valueless.

Strike Two were the people behind XL. They were led by former Maxwell executive Terry Humphreys, who had managed to preside over another business disaster and run into problems with other ventures in the brief period between leaving Maxwell in 1992 and founding XL in 1996. His partner was Terry Griffiths, who before Maxwell Business Communications had found fame with NIMSLO, the 3-D camera flop.

Humphreys ran Maxwell Consumer Publishing & Communications until it went into liquidation in the wake of Cap'n Bob's demise. Former colleagues recall him as a salesman who lived well and was always "massively optimistic". After Maxwell, Humphreys bought and sold magazine businesses, with variable results and not a few differences with partners, who sometimes found numbers were not Humphreys' strong point.

This was proved with Touch International Communications which he founded in 1994 and which collapsed owing more than £3m two years later — a month before he started XL. Touch was described by investigating accountants Grant Thornton as "hopelessly insolvent" after accumulating losses of £2m. The accountants criticised the directors who had "allowed the company to reach such a critical condition and, in our view, action should have been taken sooner". Two former directors of Touch were senior XL executives.

Undeterred the optimistic Humphreys was back in business again within weeks and has now presided over another £1m-plus failure. Why he should have been allowed to become chief executive of even an AIM company within two years of a collapse only brokers Charles Stanley and the Stock Exchange can attempt to explain. That the Touch fiasco was revealed in the listing document is not the point.

The excuse for the XL disaster is that sales of magazines and advertising in November and December were not up to the expectations of super-optimist Humphreys. But then results for the four months from June were only "broadly in line" with expectations. With hindsight it would be interesting to know exactly what that meant in late November when the listing document was published.

Why was some if not most of the November/December position not known by 19 December when the deal was approved by shareholders? It is hard to believe that by then the directors did not know the November position and have a very good idea about December given that there was only a week to go to the Christmas closedown. Again these are questions for Charles Stanley and the XL auditors Shipleys, with whom Humphreys has a close relationship: a Shipleys partner was a former XL director; and Shipleys introduced him to Card Clear's Brian Raven, who became the XL chairman and was also on the board of Life Numbers.

Among those who did not lose out from the XL crash were Charles Stanley and other advisers who shared fees of £190,000 for the flotation. No doubt creditors may have a few questions about whether these were justified. So too may the two offshore investors who had backed Humphreys and were the biggest shareholders in XL — Manx-based Ulsterman Vincent Caldwell and William Cairns in Guernsey, one-time member of the Rossminster tax avoidance crew.

They and others may also be wondering if it is not about time a public wealth warning was issued by the Department of Timidity & Inaction against serial failure Terry Humphreys.

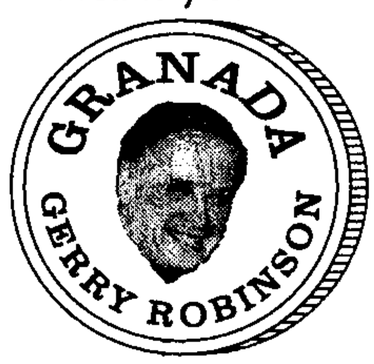
WHILE regulators IMRO may be getting to grips with his blind, deaf and dumb bosses at Morgan Grenfell, no decision seems likely by the Serious Farce Office (SFO) in the case of mad and bad fund manager Peter Young until much later this year. Inquiries and interviews continue as the SFO looks for possible co-conspirators perhaps inside but more likely outside Morgan Grenfell.

There would seem to be sufficient evidence of personal benefit received (the £350,000 loan for his new home) and planned by Young (options held by the Luxembourg letter box company Russ Oil & Gas which also made the home loan) to show the real agenda behind Young's bizarre hidden investments.

But the SFO may have two mountains to climb if it wants to put "Polaroid" in the frame.

COIN COLLECTING

Heads you win



GRANADA CHAIRMAN **GERRY ROBINSON** pockets £138,000 as "compensation" for the shortening of his contract period from 3 years to 2.

Tails you win

FIRST LEISURE M. D. **MICHAEL PAYNE** pockets £79,000 as "compensation" for the lengthening of his contract period from 1 year to 3.

It will first have to prove that he is mentally competent to stand trial — the first Young line of defence and one which may be hard to beat. And if the SFO wins that one, it will have to prove dishonesty against a defence that everyone at Morgan Grenfell knew what Young was doing and did nothing because he was a star who was not to be upset.

The "everyone knew" defence worked for Kevin Maxwell, so it is perhaps not surprising that Young's lawyers Peters & Peters are said to have retained none other than Maxwell defender Alun Jones for if and when an inspector calls.

THE SFO's one-time chief George Staple has been discreetly seeking to interest his former colleagues in the hunt for the Bhutto billions.

His firm Coward Chance represents the Pakistan government, which is seeking to trace and freeze bank accounts belonging to the saintly Benazir and her far from saintly husband Asif Ali Zardari. The home office has already agreed to give limited police assistance to the Pakistani authorities, who accuse the former prime minister and her family of the usual Third World enrichment programme.

Pakistan investigators claim to have identified assets in Britain, including a £3m Surrey mansion owned through the Isle of Man, which are linked to Zardari. The Swiss have located bank accounts containing at least £8m. Bank accounts in the British Virgin islands are also said to have been frozen.

The SFO has been slow to respond to any suggestion that it might get involved in the Bhutto investigation using its powerful section two powers to compel records and testimony. There seems little evidence of fraud which is the SFO's only remit. Corruption, which is alleged to be a major source of "Mr 10%" Zardari's wealth, is not included. Nor is drug trafficking, the somewhat thin basis on which the home office has agreed to help.

The SFO also needs no reminding that when it wanted assistance over the Bank of Conmen & Cocaine International Pakistan was no help at all. Instead it provided extradition-free sanctuary for several key BCCI players headed by founder Agha Hasan Abedi.

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Age: Height:

Occupation:

Religion:

Build: Slight ❒ Medium ❒ Large ❒

Attractiveness: Very attractive ❒ Attractive ❒ Average ❒

2. Education

Private / Public ❒ Grammar ❒
Comprehensive ❒ Sec. Modern ❒

O Levels / GCSE's ❒ A levels ❒
Further Education ❒
University / Professional Equivalent ❒
Technical Qualification ❒

3. Your Personality

(tick which traits closely describe you)

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❒ Serious ❒ Practical
❒ Considerate ❒ Conventional
❒ Shy ❒ Reliable
❒ Romantic ❒ Adventurous

4. Your Attitudes

(tick for yes, cross for no or leave blank)

❒ Do you involve yourself with community activities?
❒ Are you looking for one special relationship?
❒ Does your work make it difficult to meet new people?
❒ Do you want to extend your social life as well as finding a special relationship?
❒ Do you devote a lot of time to your social life?

5. Your interests

(sections 5. and 6. Please tick for a like, cross for dislike or leave blank for no preference.)

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❒ Pubs ❒ Classical music
❒ Sports/Keep fit ❒ Theatre/Arts
❒ Politics/History ❒ Watching TV
❒ Reading ❒ Smoking
❒ Travelling ❒ Astrology
❒ Science/Tech ❒ Children
❒ Cinema ❒ Homemaking
❒ Pets/Animals ❒ Gardening
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6. Details of your ideal partner

Minimum age: Maximum age:

Height: min. max. Don't mind ❒

Marital status:

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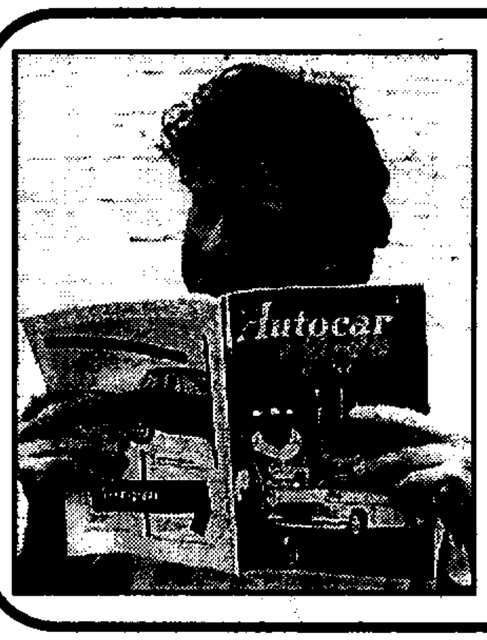

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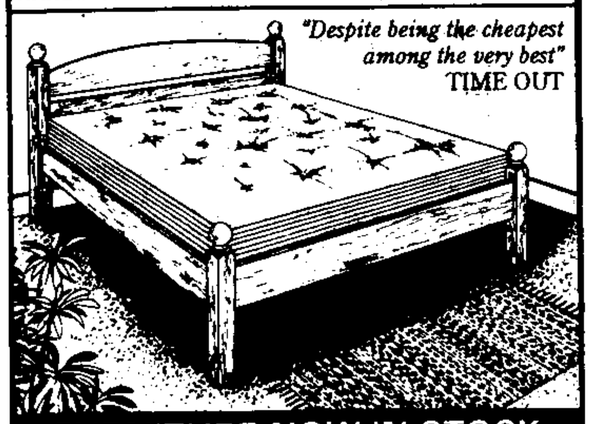

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TOM BUSSMANN
The Guardian.

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MALE, 28 YEARS OLD, computer programmer and net head, seeks woman to explore London with. Box 0645.

MATERIAL GIRL, undergraduate, food lover (Tart at Heart) seeks inspiration for use in the Faculty of Love. Imaginative answers, please. Box 0745.

SLIM, ATTRACTIVE black lady, very interested in the arts, seeks honest, passionate gentleman for lasting relationship, 30-50 – any nationality. Box 0845

PRETTY WOMAN, 22, sophisticated, leggy, shapely, 5'8", good attitude, seeking successful, open-minded man for mutually beneficial relationship. PO Box 10262, London W2 5GA.

WANTED – TALL light-hearted public school gentleman, 50-60 years, for tall blonde elegant woman. Photograph please. Berkshire. Box 1345.

ATTRACTIVE 40's W1 intelligent petite single woman desires older prosperous male for romance. Box 1445.

HAPPY WOMAN, slim, blonde, 36 seeks kind, professional type (lawyer?). Likes food, conversation. (London). Box 1545.

AFFECTIONATE URBANE man, 49, 5'7", 10st, brown hair/eyes, literary/musical interests, seeks relationship with naughty (but agreeably corrigible) female. Central London. Box 1645.

FEMININE, GORGEOUS, kind, single teacher, 30's, mobile, wltm professional, single gentleman. Box 2645.

FIT AND HANDSOME male seeks chicks for fun and frolics – London/SE. Box 3345.

LOVELY, SENSUAL, TALL brunette, 27 seeks confident, intelligent, attractive man for adventure and romance. Box 2745.

BUSINESSMAN / entrepreneur, 30's, intelligent, creative, tall, funny, divorced seeks similar slim attractive solvent special female, Cotswolds. Box 1344.

CARIBBEAN BASED finance professional, attractive, 6'2" seeks broadminded, intelligent female. Photo appreciated. Box 2945.

INTERESTING, INTERESTED tall, dark etc. prof. male, 30, seeks intelligent, witty, graceful female for romance. Berks/London. Box 3045.

GENUINE, SUCCESSFUL businessman, 36, attached but unfulfilled, seeks long-term dangerous liaison with attractive soulmate to fill the gap in my life. Manchester. Box 3145.

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HORNY, HEDONISTIC, hirsute muscular company director (36) seeks dirty bitch. London. Box 3545.

APPRECIATION, PLEASURE, delights, available, long-term, from warm-hearted, occasionally wicked, very successful arts philanthropist, 58, beard, to one smiling muse, probably brunette. Photograph persuasive. Box 3645.

SLIM, ATTRACTIVE, impractical woman, late 40s, London, no ties, seeks DIY enthusiast with good looks and intellect for serious relationship. No anoraks or school boy pursuits. Photo appreciated. Box 3745.

VERY ATTRACTIVE FIT professional 39 year old martial arts instructor, sensitive, reliable — would like to meet sincere attractive professional or established lady — age immaterial. Any area. Phone: 01623 461183 anytime.

ATTRACTIVE WELL-BRED attached professional man 30's, seeks lady for exciting trysts. London. Box 3845.

ATTRACTIVE mid-forties married male seeks female equivalent for languid lunches and post-prandial passion. Central London. Box 0944.

ATTRACTIVE married woman – intelligent, slim, 40, wltm man 45-60 educated well-off, maybe attached, seeking occasional romantic liaisons. Box 2845.

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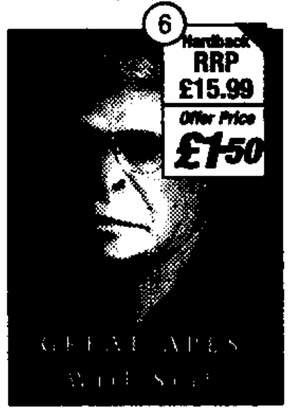

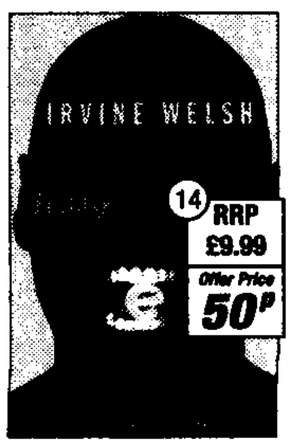

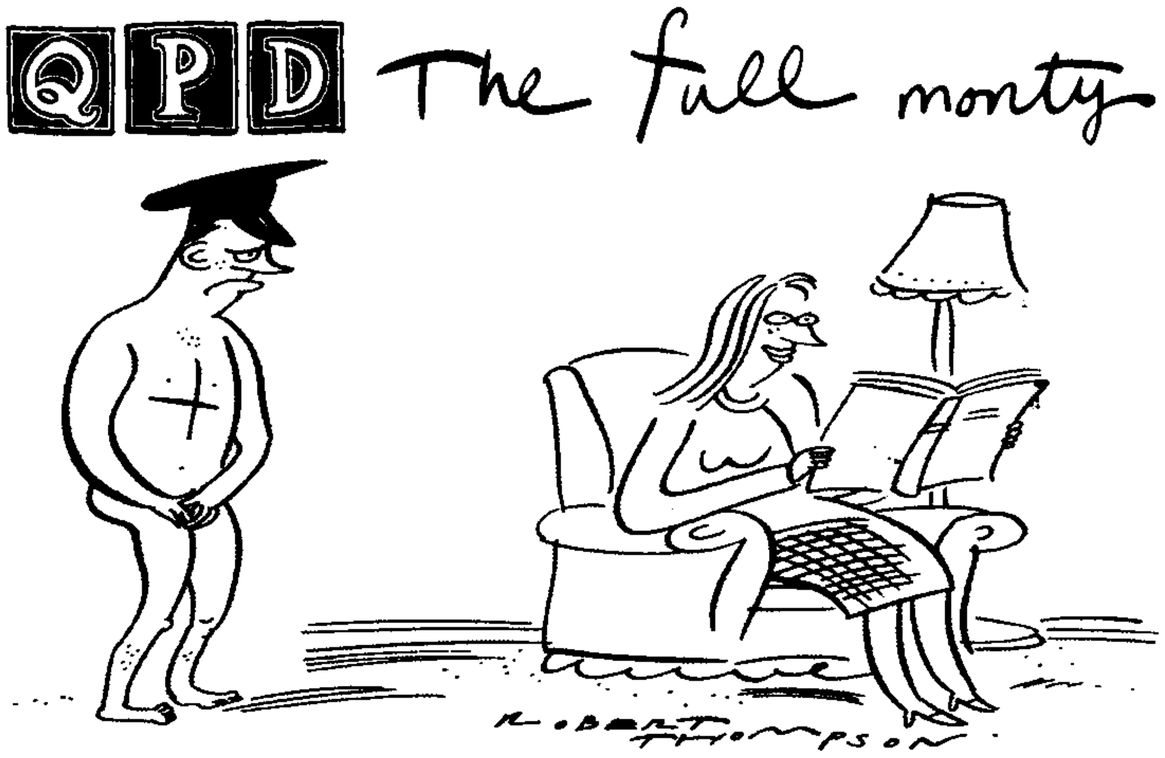

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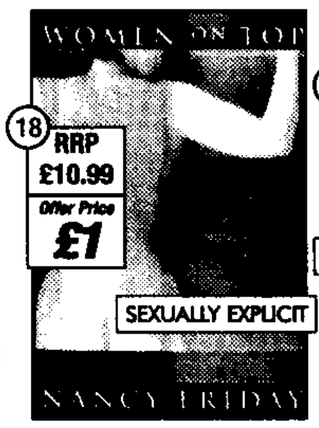

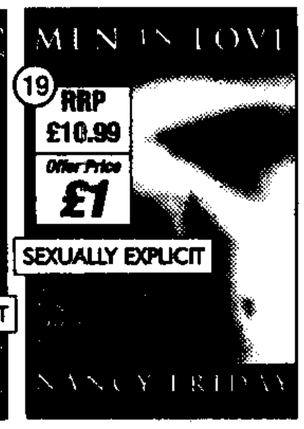

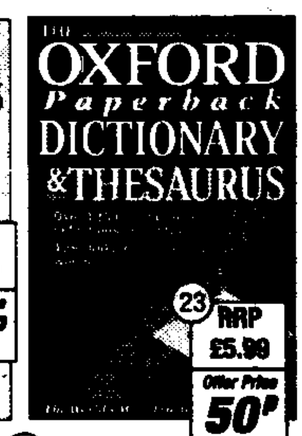

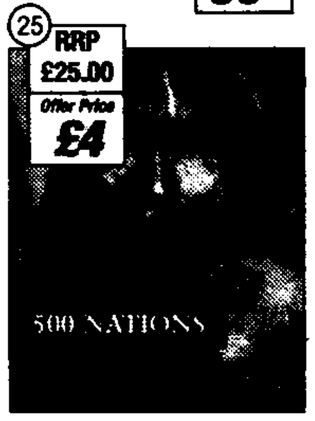

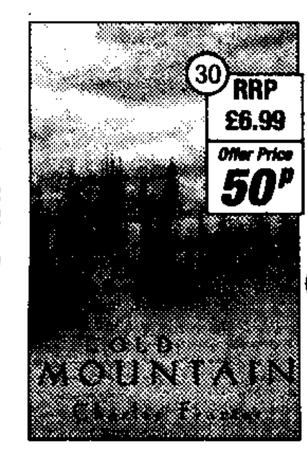

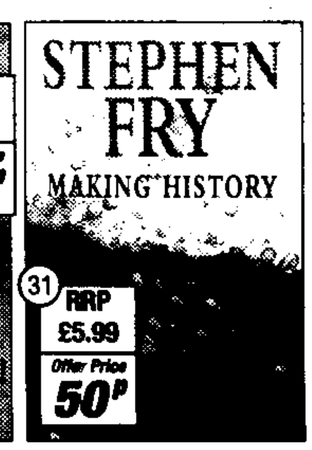

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